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Bass

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… ar Magazine

Oh, Suzi Q!

ON THE BASS GUITAR...

Ms. QUATRO!

HORACE PANTER, SPECIALS

DOUG WIMBISH, LIVING COLOUR

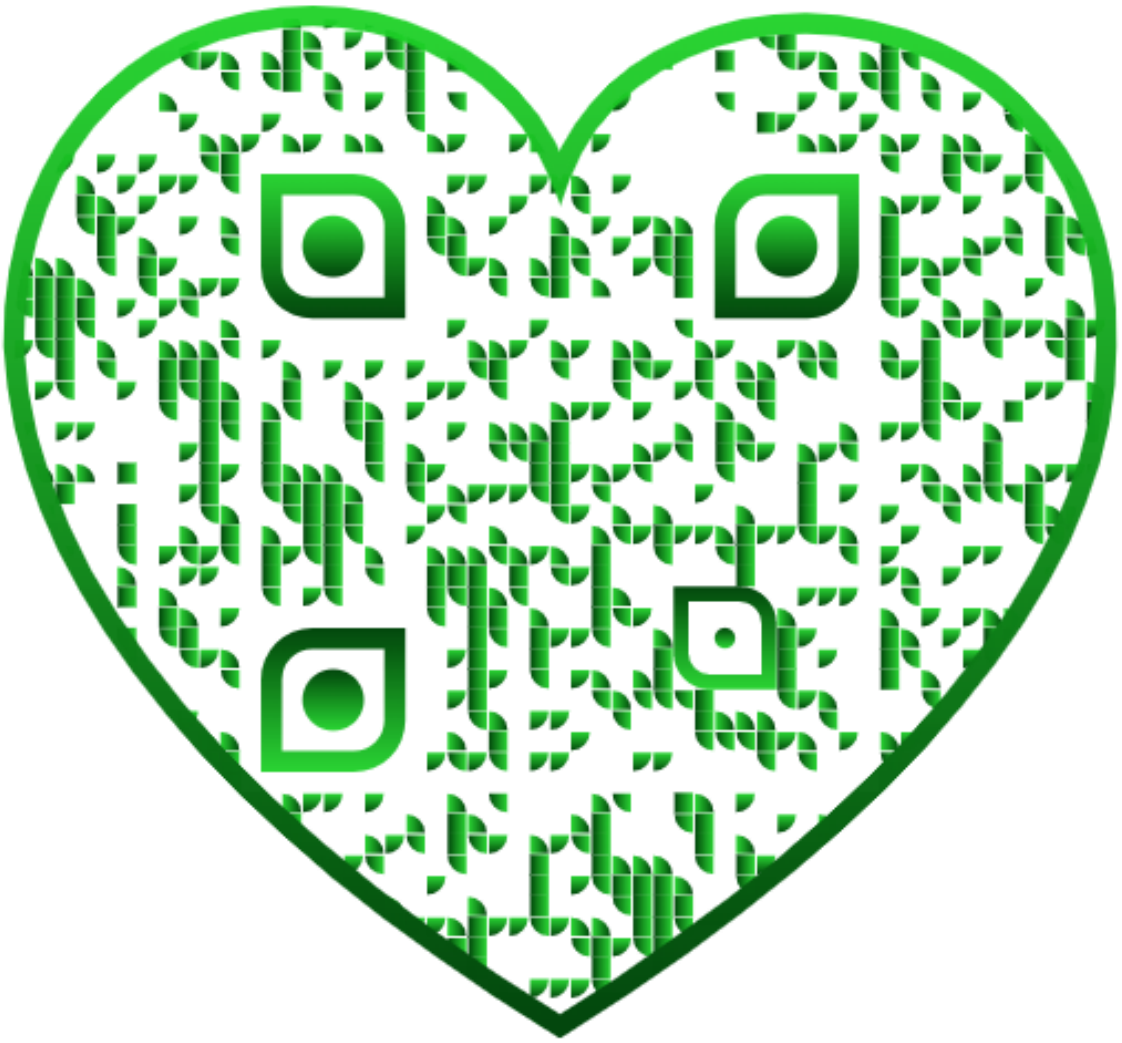
PAT BADGER, EXTREME

JOHN BENTLEY, SQUEEZE

STEVE HANLEY, THE FALL

LONDON BASS GUITAR SHOW 2015 PREVIEWS

STUART HAMM CONFIRMED FOR THE LONDON BASS GUITAR SHOW 2015!



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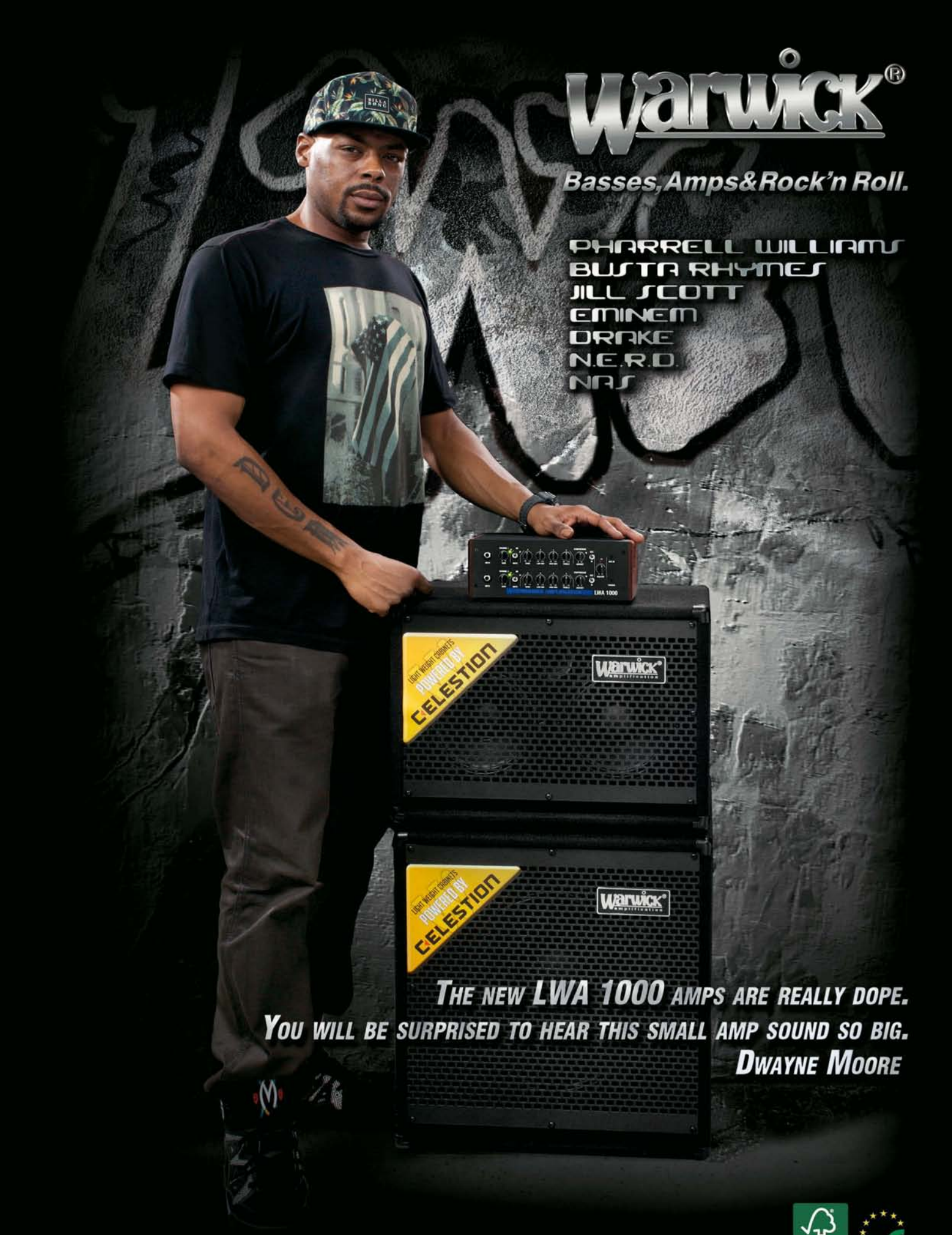

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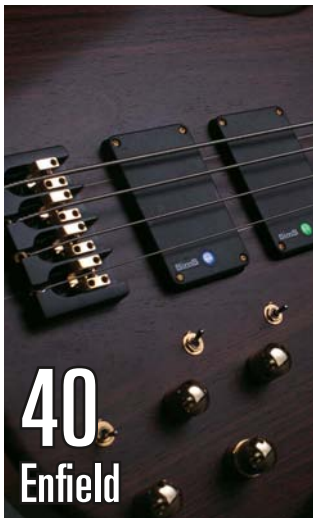
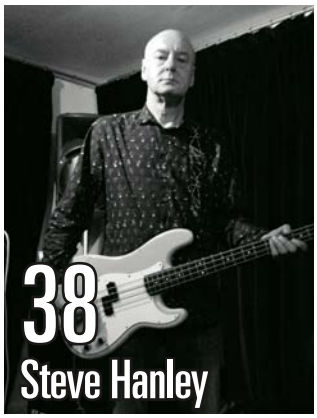
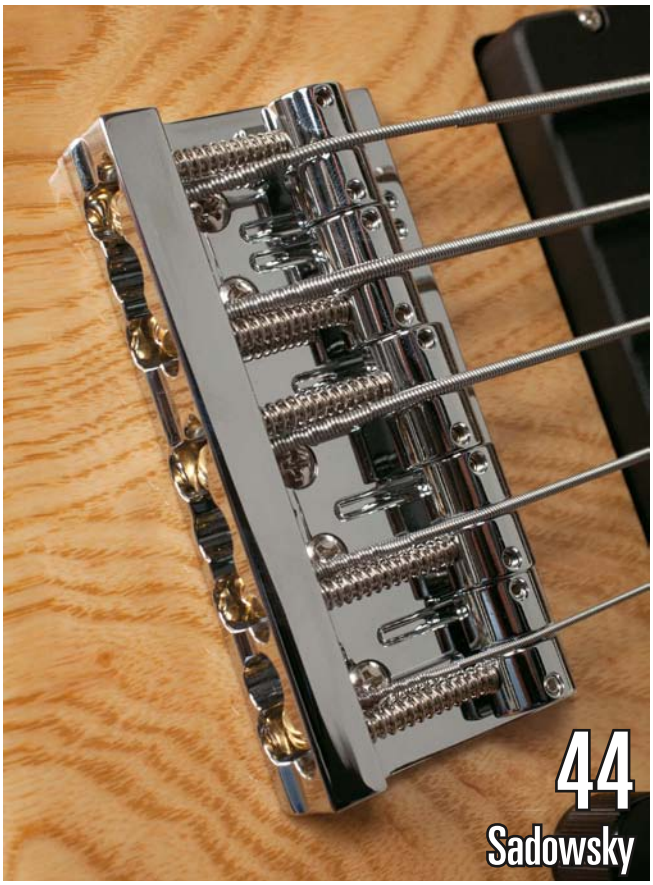
***Bass Guitar Magazine* is proud to support the Music Industries Association.**

A merry game to while away the January evenings: name the biggest-selling bass player in the world. Paul McCartney or Gene Simmons? Definitely. How about Suzi Quatro? Absolutely! After no fewer than 55 million album sales, Suzi is still beating hell out of that iconic Fender P-Bass, as we found when we popped in to her frankly Downton Abbey-esque manor house in remotest Essex. What we learned blew our minds, and it'll blow yours too. Elsewhere in this issue we catch up with a trio of Brit bass royalty – Horace Panter of the Specials, John Bentley of Squeeze and Steve Hanley of the Fall – and talk bass with the mighty Doug Wimbish too. We also bring you an insider's guide to the forthcoming London Bass Guitar Show 2015, with words from Billy Sheehan, Stuart Hamm, Divinity Roxx, Lee Rocker and many other awe-inspiring talents. We'll see you at Olympia on 7 and 8 March – it's going to be epic.

As always, *BGM*'s mission is to equip you with the tools and tuition you need to be a better bass player. Check out our reviews section, where we road test amazing gear from Enfield, Sadowsky, Bill Nash, Warwick and Ashdown. The aim is to cover a range of gear with all budgets in mind, so whether you're looking for a sub-£300 combo, a £1,300 mid-market bass or a handmade instrument costing more than a family car, you've come to the right place. The same philosophy applies to our tuition columns, delivered by a team of the world's best bass players: divided into beginner, intermediate and advanced levels of theory and technique, there's something here for everyone. Add columns on double bass and effects plus touring and cover band advice and there's no better source of info for musicians on the low frequencies. Enjoy! ***Joel McIver, Editor***







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THE LOW DOWN

NEWS AND VIEWS FROM THE BASS WORLD, COLLATED BY BGM'S TEAM OF INTREPID NEWSHOUNDS

DETH DOWN UNDER

David Ellefson of Megadeth will be executing several Australian dates of spoken-word content, audience Q&As and bass demos between 24 and 29 March. 'An Evening With David Ellefson' will include readings from David's recent autobiography, co-authored with *BGM* editor Joel McIver and released last year.

EVE HO

Ace luthier Douglas Mullen of Eve Guitars has a new bass out, the Iona. "We've been working on this instrument for the last eight months, and it has turned out insanely great!" he tells us. "Built from the ground up for playability, this stunning design has rounded elegant curves that hug the body in any playing position. The upper horn guarantees the best playing position whether standing or sitting, and is perfectly balanced. Utilising sapele, American ash and wenge for the construction ensures a wide tonal range with plenty of bite courtesy of the two-band active EQ and Eve Jazz+ Humbucker pickup arrangement. The Iona comes as a four-string (a five-string is coming soon) with ABM fully adjustable nut and deluxe gig bag as standard."

All new Iona basses can be used in both active and passive mode via the push/pull volume control from the neck Jazz pickup, with no volume drop between modes. The bridge humbucker can also be used in serial/parallel in both active and passive positions. This 100 per cent hand-made bass comes with a price tag of £980 plus P&P direct from Eve Guitars. A professional flight-case can be ordered for an additional £80. The Iona will also be available from Bass Gear.

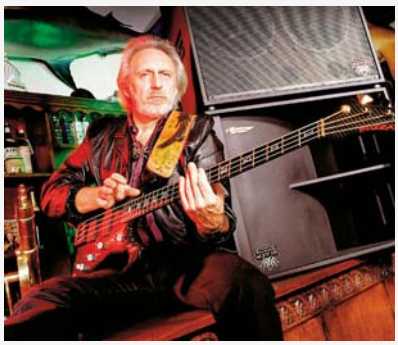
Info: www.evebass.com, www.bassgear.co.uk

NAMM TOUR

Coming to the NAMM Winter Show with us in late January? Let's hope so, as we'll be attending a very special celebration of the late musicians John Entwistle and Keith Moon of the Who. Dubbed 'The Ox And The Loon', the evening is organised by sometime Whitesnake/Foreigner drummer Brian Tichy and takes place at the Observatory club in Santa Ana on January 24. Bassists Billy Sheehan, Phil Chen, Dug Pinnick and Marco Mendoza will be there alongside drummers Kenny Aronoff, Dave Lombardo, Rikki Rockett, Mike Portnoy and many more.

As Tichy told *BGM*'s sister magazine *Drummer*, "For Winter NAMM, we have three days of insanity! We have the Bonzo Bash on the Thursday, an event called Randy Rhoads Remembered on the Friday and then The Ox And The Loon on the Saturday. All three nights are at the Observatory and it's going to be a crazy few days. Life is short, and if I can be a part of these events, that's why I'm on this planet!"

Info: http://observatoryoc.com/event/Entwistle-Moon



JONES THE BASS

Ace amp-maker Phil Jones has announced the arrival of the PJB BigHead mobile headphone amp with D/A converter. Barely larger than an iPhone, the amp functions first as a bass headphone amplifier, with 10 times the power of the usual MP3 players and smartphones. More importantly, the BigHead is a recording tool both in digital and analogue. As an Analogue Digital Converter, it comes with Burr Brown digital components and a 48KHz 16Bit digital conversion USB out, enabling recording your bass to a digital workstation. Finally, it's an analogue preamp via the headphone out to an amp or mixer. A charge lasts up to eight hours, say PJB: look out for a review as soon as we can get our hands on one.

Info: www.philjonesbass.com

STING STUNG

According to the *New York Daily News*, Police bassist Sting has encountered some difficulties with the performance of his Broadway play *The Last Ship*. Apparently the show, inspired by the former Mr Sumner's upbringing in the north of England and for which he has supplied music and lyrics, has failed to pull in the punters and has not impressed critics. As a result Sting has reportedly given up his music and lyrics royalties, estimated at around $10,000 per week, and has joined the cast on stage to help pull in playgoers. Now, as a bass magazine we'll take the high road when it comes to Sting, who music critics often dismiss as bland or just too rich for their liking. As a bass player, the guy is pretty much unrivalled in our humble opinion; if you're in NYC any time soon, consider supporting the show.

Info: www.broadway.com/shows/last-ship

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Triumvirate

We select three essential albums from a genre or player.
THIS MONTH: Bernard Edwards

1 *C'EST CHIC* BY CHIC

Whether you worship at the altar of polyester suits and platform shoes, or believe that disco as a genre should be buried in concrete shoes in the North Sea, there's no denying the quality of the tunes here. From the bouncing groove and slides of 'Chic Cheer', the melodic pulse of 'Savoir Faire' to that classic bass break in 'Le Freak', Bernard Edwards never puts a foot wrong. Every bassist must own this album!

2 *RIPTIDE* BY ROBERT PALMER

Like all the greats, Edwards was more than a one-trick pony. The man could play the right part in any song, irrelevant of genre. On this album from the late singer Robert Palmer, Bernard proves he could rock out with the best of them. He keeps things tight and pumping, but keep an ear out for nice little touches on 'Addicted To Love' where he drops the first eighth note to give the song a laid-back groove.

3 *WE ARE FAMILY* BY SISTER SLEDGE

There are so many bass-lines on this album that have been sampled, copied and ripped off that you may well have most of it on your iPod. The beautiful, simple groove of 'He's The Greatest Dancer' is one of the most copied grooves in history, while the perennial radio favourite 'We Are Family' has a pulsing riff and some tasty slap licks in the mix.

BELL BOY

Sometime *BGM* interviewee Bryan Beller is releasing a live CD and DVD called *Culture Clash Live* on January 20. Beller's rock/fusion power trio The Aristocrats – also featuring Guthrie Govan on guitar and Marco Minnemann on drums – toured three different continents during the band's 100+ show Culture Clash World Tour last year, showcasing Beller's frankly stunning bass chops throughout. A second live release, *Secret Show: Live In Osaka*, is also on its way. Beller tells *BGM* that the shows weren't entirely stress-free: "The panoply of technical pitfalls that ensued reached a certain comic level of absurdity. The crowds were unremittingly awesome, only to be rivalled in ferocity by the gremlins in each location."
Info: www.the-aristocrats-band.com

Me And My Bass

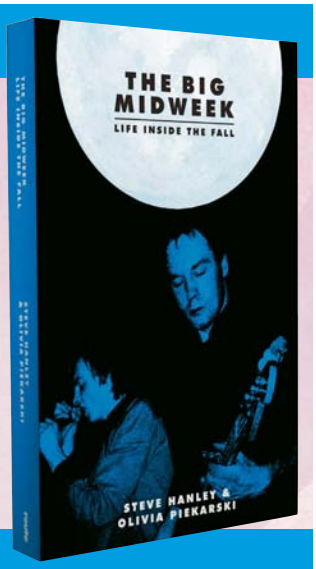
In which a *BGM* reader tells us about his or her bass gear...
This month: Tom Alford, Sandstone

"I play bass for Northern Irish metal band Sandstone, and also had the chance this summer to lay down the low end for Tim 'Ripper' Owens on a combined tour, which meant two sets every night of power metal – so my gear had to be up to the challenge! Bass-wise I stuck with my Rickenbacker, although I occasionally swapped it up with the Aria Pro II Black & Gold, an active version of the Cliff Burton signature bass. In terms of rig, I decided to go for a rackmount system consisting of a Hartke HA5500, Tech 21 VT Bass preamp and DBX 2626XS compressor, through a set of Laney 4x10 and 1x15 speakers. The VT Bass has a great warm distortion and allows you to blend it with your clean tone so as not to lose the low end, while the compressor really helped to control the bass sound in the many various venues we played: as a fingerstyle player, this really helped. Another band I recently recorded for is Selene, which has just released a new EP. Check it all out at www.sandstonerocks.com and www.selene-theband.co.uk."

Want to be in Me And My Bass? Email the editor: joel@blazepublishing.co.uk.

Pic by Noemi Schwarzbox

WIN!

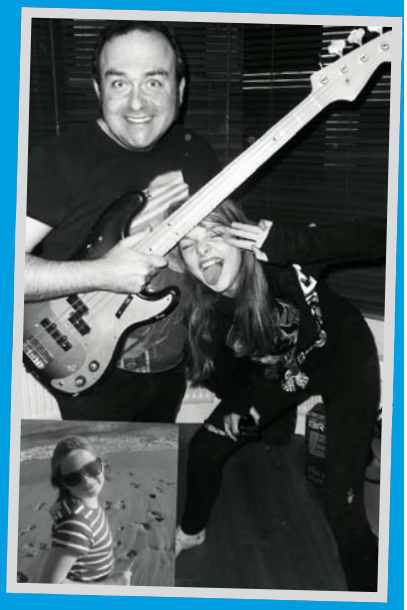


That nice Steve Hanley of The Fall, interviewed on page 38, and his publishers at Route Books have given us two signed copies of his autobiography, *The Big Midweek*. Nab one by getting this right:

Who's the singer in The Fall?
A Mark E Smith
B Mark E Jones
C Mark E Mark

Answers to the usual postal address or to joel@blazepublishing.co.uk by 23 February.

WON!



Back in October we asked *BGM* readers to nominate your favourite bass-related event of 2014. You responded with a flood of entries, some hilarious, many serious, but all highly gratifying: the winning entry goes to Robert Mitchell, who nominated his daughter Millie starting to play bass as his event of the year. He scoops a fantastic Bill Nash PB-57 bass worth £1,300, and is pictured here with Millie and her sister Erin.

"This bass is unbelievable!" Robert tells us. "I have been playing bass for 26 years and it has given me a new burst of inspiration. Millie feels the same way and has even started to play slap on it which she has never touched on before. I can't seem to stop slapping the bass, it's really rekindled my love for slap as I've mainly been playing fingerstyle for a few years. I can't wait to try the bass on the next batch of new recordings with my band the Strays (https://soundcloud.com/the-str-1) and my side project the Wrong Way Back (https://soundcloud.com/thewrongwayback)".

Congratulations to the Mitchell family and thanks to all who entered.

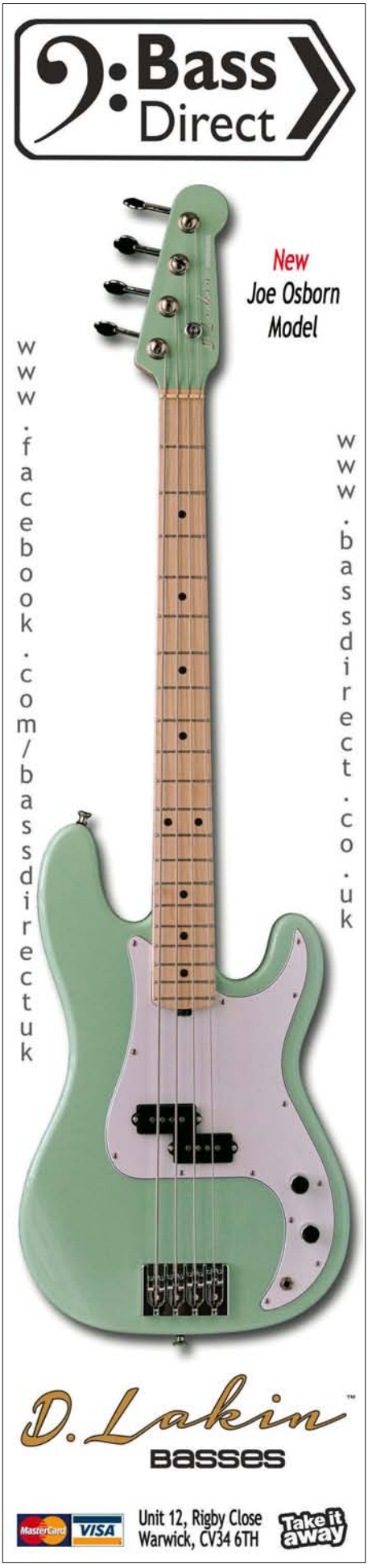
A USB of Steve Lawson's complete works goes to Susann Finpå.

Revolver

Every month we tell you the bass-line we can't stop listening to

THIS MONTH: 'Slither'

Bassist: *Duff McKagan*
Album: *Contraband by Velvet Revolver*
With his bass slung around his knees and hammering with a pick, Duff McKagan has always been one of the coolest bass players to take to the stage. And he's penned more than a few catchy bass hooks in his time. The intro bass riff for this tune has to rate as one of his best, with its clanky, grinding tone and hypnotic snake-like movement making it the perfect riff for this hard rock classic.



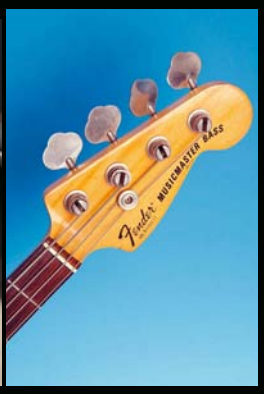
Simon McVeigh has been a session bassist for over 20 years, and works as a bass tutor at the Royal County School of Music in County Meath, Ireland. He has recorded with many artists and runs www.breadheadmusic.com, a contacts resource for professionals in the music industry.

EVERY MONTH MASTER RESTORER SIMON MCVEIGH TWEAKS A KNACKERED OLD FENDER MUSICMASTER INTO A THING OF BEAUTY. THIS MONTH SIMON SORTS OUT THE PICKUPS. PICS: DAVE KEEGAN

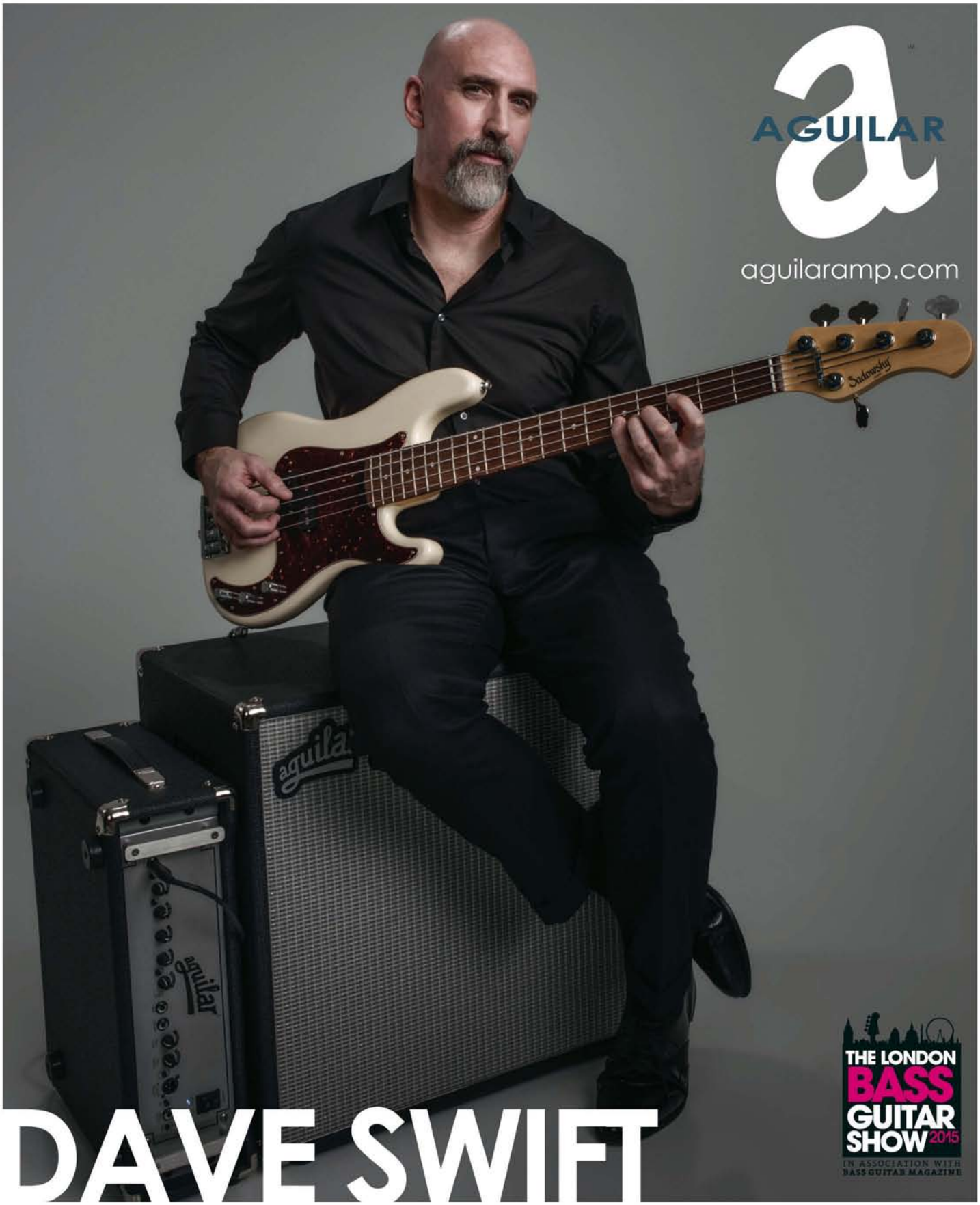
Replacing a pickup on any bass is a relatively easy task, but on this one it is especially simple. As with most of the older Fender basses, the electronics are straightforward, but make sure that you take a few photos of the wiring configuration before you disconnect anything in case you want to revert back to the instrument's original state at a later stage. Keep the old pickup and any other bits you take off an instrument, as you might want to revert it to its original condition to resell it.

There are a few pickups on the market that will directly fit this bass without requiring any body routing to accommodate them, so which one do you choose? First, ask yourself what you want to achieve by changing the pickup in the first place. In this case, when I first played the bass I noticed that the output from the pickup was particularly low. That said, replacing the pickup with one with a higher output is almost certainly going to change the tone of the bass, so it's always going to be a bit of a trade off with tone between power. With all this in mind, the replacement pickup that I have chosen for this bass is a Seymour Duncan SCPB-3 Quarter Pound.

My current bass amp is a Phil Jones rig with a single input. I am very happy with its sound and I don't generally tweak or change any setting on my amp during a performance – that's why soundchecks were invented – so the pickup output is just another thing that I have to take into consideration when I am deciding which basses to bring out on the road. This new pickup slotted into position easily, with only two wires to connect: it delivers the punch that I was looking for, with buckets more output than the original. The tone still retains certain characteristics that sit well with a bass of this vintage. If you're in the market for a vintage Fender Precision or Jazz, do yourself a favour and try out one of these little gems: you'll be pleasantly surprised, for a fraction of the price that its bigger siblings can fetch.



COSTS THIS MONTH
Seymour Duncan pickup £50
Total: £540
Contact: simonmcveigh@eircom.net



Jools Holland, Joe Bonamassa, Adele,
George Benson, Chaka Khan, BB King,
David Sanborn, Gregory Porter
and well, we could be here all day.....

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THE MU PAGE

GIVE IT UP FOR THE TEACHERS, SAYS THE MUSICIANS' UNION

Did you have a teacher who sparked an interest in a subject for you? Someone who went that extra mile, and was so absorbed and enthused by their subject that you couldn't help but be in awe of them? Can you still remember how you couldn't wait for their lesson?

If you talk to many professional musicians, this is how they will speak about their music teachers. One inspirational teacher might be the reason they became a musician in the first place. Many more may have encouraged and supported them along the way. You, reading this, might be the inspired student, the inspiring teacher – or more likely both.

The reality of most musicians' working lives is that they will teach as part of their career. Many say it is one of the most rewarding things they do. These musicians are creating and inspiring the next generation of musicians to perform and perhaps to teach.

It feels as if there are more opportunities to learn to play instruments than ever before. Yet there are reports of a real crisis in music education. Many music teachers are leaving or losing their jobs. College and university courses are closing down across the UK. The real opportunities, and with them the idea that 'professional musician' is an actual job people do, are in the hands of the privileged few.

Why is this? Funding is the main reason. Cuts are affecting music education provision from pre-school right up to colleges and universities. Schools are encouraged to be more like businesses. But making money from education is rarely a healthy proposition, especially in music education, which has high delivery costs including expensive instruments and highly trained professionals.

What does all this mean? Teachers are losing their jobs, earning less, and losing rights we take for granted such as sick pay. They have to pay for the rooms they are asked to teach in, or pass that cost on to the children they teach. Morale is understandably low.

So we want you to remember your music teacher. Think about the impact music lessons have had on your life, big or small. And tell us why you support your music teacher. How was your teacher an inspiration? Share what makes your teacher special using #SupportMyMusicTeacher.

If you're teaching now, share this with your students. Ask them what music lessons mean to them, what they have learnt, and what part of it they enjoy most. Send them to theMU.org/SupportMyMusicTeacher.

Let's show why music education is worth fighting for in the UK.

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MU members get access to a range of career development advice. If you're considering a change, contact your regional office and book a one-to-one with your MU official for bespoke advice. For general advice and more information about how to join the Union, please visit theMU.org.

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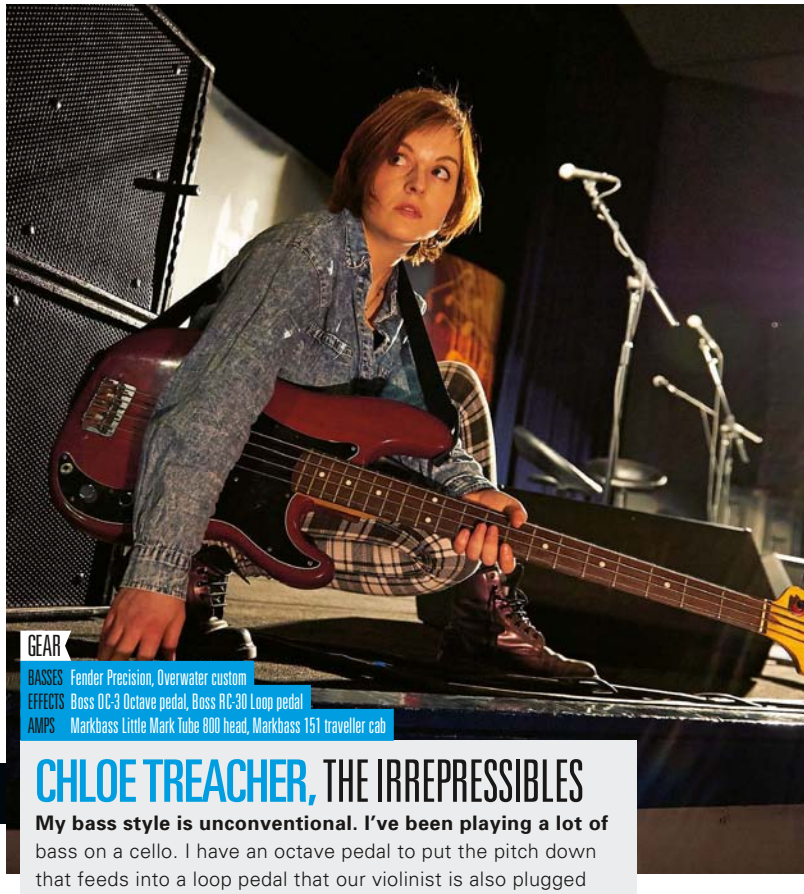
BASSICALLY SPEAKING

BASSISTS REVEAL THE TRICKS OF THEIR TRADE FASTER THAN A SNAPPING D STRING

ANNE METTE IVERSEN, ANNE METTE IVERSEN QUARTET

I would describe my bass style as my own, strongly related to my compositional voice. My upright bass has all the low and high end that I need. I do not slap. I slap other things… like tennis balls. My favourite bass ever to date is my current Tyrolean acoustic, from around 1870. My bass heroes are JS Bach, Johannes Brahms, Ludwig van Beethoven, Antonín Dvorák... and well, okay, Steve Swallow, Ron Carter, Charlie Haden, Jimmy Garrison, and more than a few others. I love different players for different things, and they are all the greatest. The most profound statement I have is my music. There are no words that tell better what I believe in and about my experiences, than the notes I write with a pen or play on my bass – the notes that come out of my head, heart, hands, ears, body, or wherever those notes come from. And let me add that the music has to be experienced on an emotional level too. Sure, maybe it can be analysed and the message can be transformed into words, but then you have to do that. The words that I can put together are not magical. If they were, that would have been the medium that I express myself in, and not music.

www.annemetteiversen.com



GEAR
BASSES Fender Precision, Overwater custom
EFFECTS Boss OC-3 Octave pedal, Boss RC-30 Loop pedal
AMPS Markbass Little Mark Tube 800 head, Markbass 151 traveller cab

CHLOE TREACHER, THE IRREPRESSIBLES

My bass style is unconventional. I've been playing a lot of bass on a cello. I have an octave pedal to put the pitch down that feeds into a loop pedal that our violinist is also plugged into. The idea is that we create entire string quartets from just two of us. The loop pedal creates so many possibilities and it always keeps you on your toes. There's even one song where live, I loop up the cello and 'bass' parts and then switch to a bass guitar for the last bit. Of course if I get asked to do a gig on just bass guitar then I stick to the basics and try and meld my mind with the drummers. The secret of playing bass well is being sensitive. The music you are creating is way more important than your ego. My first bass was a Vantage that I found in a little place in Kingston. It was dark wood with four strings and did the job. My favourite basses ever are my two current basses: a 1979 wine red custom USA P-Bass I got in 2010 and my custom-made Overwater 33" J4 series that they built for me when I got endorsed by them. It's got a gorgeous, clean, bright tone, which does everything that the P-Bass doesn't. My bass heroes are Tina Weymouth, John McVie, Bill Wyman, Mick Grondahl, Del Palmer and Kim Gordon. A special mention to Lee Sklar, Steve Lawson and Mike Mondesir who I have been lucky enough to become good friends with. Their encouragement and guidance means the world to me. The bass is the most maternal instrument of the band. If you think of a traditional role of a woman in a family (exceptions aside) it's been her job to keep all members of the family working together smoothly as a team, solving arguments and trying to be as productive as you can in the most time- and energy-efficient ways. That's a bassist.

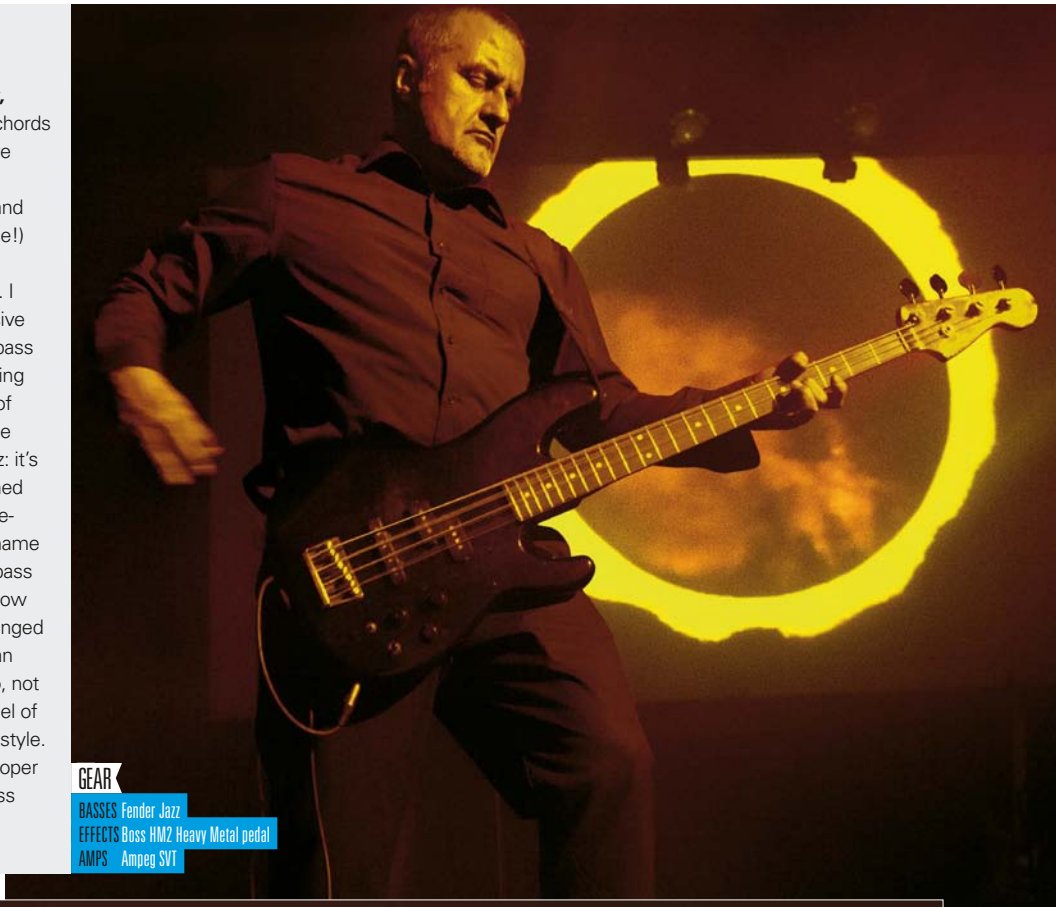
> "THERE'S EVEN ONE SONG WHERE LIVE, I LOOP UP THE CELLO AND 'BASS' PARTS AND THEN SWITCH TO A BASS GUITAR FOR THE LAST BIT. OF COURSE IF I GET ASKED TO DO A GIG ON JUST BASS GUITAR THEN I STICK TO THE BASICS AND TRY AND MELD MY MIND WITH THE DRUMMERS"

www.chloetreacher.com

BEN GREEN, GODFLESH

I would describe my bass style as heavy, downtuned and driving. Sometimes I play chords to give extra weight and depth. I like to have as big a physical impact on people's bodies as I can. People have been physically sick and had orgasms (although not at the same time!) at our live shows as a result of the intense low end and sheer physicality of the sound. I sometimes slap, because it adds a percussive tone and physicality. The secret of playing bass well is practice, naturally. For me I value being innovative and thinking outside the norms of what you are 'supposed to do'. My favourite bass ever to date is my current Fender Jazz: it's a joy to play and can handle being downtuned to B, which means I don't have to use a five-string. My bass heroes? Too many, but to name a few: Brian Wilson, he didn't always play bass on his records, but he wrote and dictated how to play to session musicians and totally changed the way bass was used in music. He was an incredibly talented multi-instrumentalist too, not just a great bass player. Jean-Jacques Burnel of the Stranglers, who had a great sound and style. Dennis Dunaway from the original Alice Cooper Band, again a very inventive and unique bass player who never wasted a note.

www.avalancheinc.co.uk



GEAR

BASSES Fender Jazz
EFFECTS Boss HM2 Heavy Metal pedal
AMPS Ampeg SVT

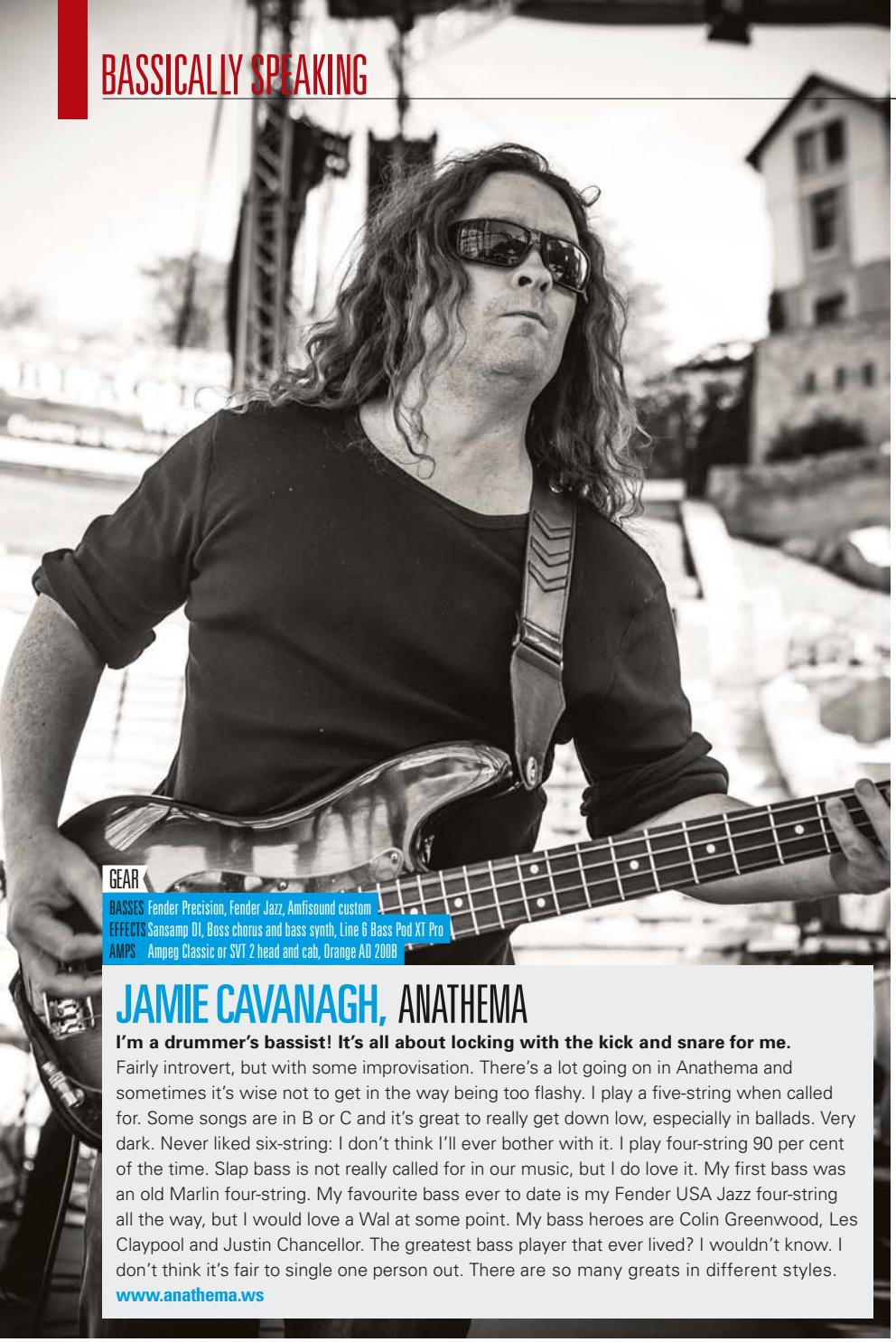
GEAR

BASSES BC Rich Virgin, Westone Spectrum
EFFECTS Electro-Harmonix Big Muff, Pro Co Juggernaut, Roland (pre-Boss) Jet Phaser AP-7, Boss Digital Delay/Pitch Shifter, Behringer tape delay pedal
AMPS Ashdown APM 1200 EVO II power amp, Ashdown RPM-1 EVO II preamp, Ashdown cabs

ADAM RICHARDSON, 11 PARANOIAS

The sub and mid ranges are most important to me. I use a .135 gauge to tune to A on a four-string bass, which is huge. I am very happy playing beyond the 12th fret, so I've got the tonal ranges covered. I do not slap, because Larry Graham invented and perfected it and no one can touch him. Plus, slap bass in the midst of a furious psych-out jam that opens black holes before your very eyes isn't really the place for that sound. The secret of playing bass well in three simple steps: make sure your bass rig sounds amazing tonally and loud enough to physically and literally move your body; smoke enough weed to feel like you are properly hallucinating; just let yourself go... fall into the void... never ever think about what you are playing or it will all go wrong. My favourite bass ever to date is my Westone Spectrum Series 2, the last production model they made in the 80s. Amazing EQ and electrics, beautiful to play and the longest scale I ever saw, with 24 jumbo frets and a very low action. I have two of these basses in black and red.

11paranoias.bandcamp.com



GEAR
BASSES Fender Precision, Fender Jazz, Amfisound custom
EFFECTS Sansamp DI, Boss chorus and bass synth, Line 6 Bass Pod XT Pro
AMPS Ampeg Classic or SVT 2 head and cab, Orange AD 200B

JAMIE CAVANAGH, ANATHEMA

I'm a drummer's bassist! It's all about locking with the kick and snare for me. Fairly introvert, but with some improvisation. There's a lot going on in Anathema and sometimes it's wise not to get in the way being too flashy. I play a five-string when called for. Some songs are in B or C and it's great to really get down low, especially in ballads. Very dark. Never liked six-string: I don't think I'll ever bother with it. I play four-string 90 per cent of the time. Slap bass is not really called for in our music, but I do love it. My first bass was an old Marlin four-string. My favourite bass ever to date is my Fender USA Jazz four-string all the way, but I would love a Wal at some point. My bass heroes are Colin Greenwood, Les Claypool and Justin Chancellor. The greatest bass player that ever lived? I wouldn't know. I don't think it's fair to single one person out. There are so many greats in different styles.

www.anathema.ws

GEAR
BASSES Fender Jazz
EFFECTS Sansamp, Boss Overdrive
AMPS Various

IVO RAMALHO, POETICAT

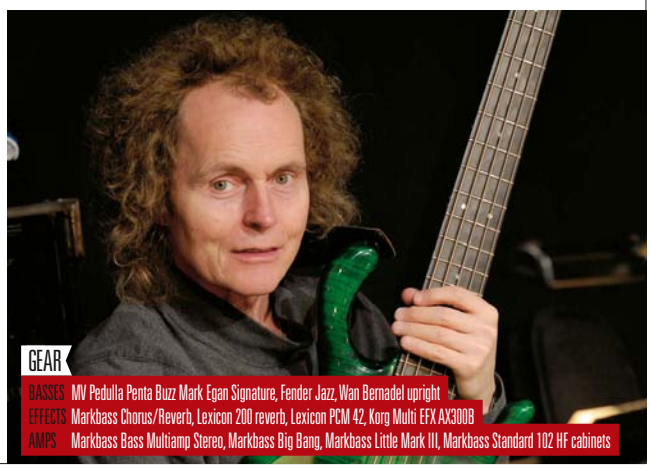
Even though I love a good low B sometimes, I do not play five- or six-string bass. I can get everything I need musically from a four-string bass: most of the bass players that have inspired me over the years all play four-string basses and I have never felt the need to change. I do not generally slap as I find it too intrusive: it can easily take away from the drums and the groove, and work against the song and me. I'm not opposed to it in the right moment, but it generally goes against my style. For me, the secret of playing bass well is keeping the groove, having good timing, and the ability to listen to the silence and space that the song needs. One of the best tips my dad gave me when I started playing the bass was that simplicity is often more efficient than a complex lick: I try to stay true to that! The greatest bass player that ever lived is Flea. He is such a complete bass player who is constantly evolving and exploring himself musically. My profound 'Whoa!' thought for all my fellow bass players is: don't try to be like your idol. The more you sound like yourself the better and more comfortable you'll be as a bass player.

www.poeticat.co.uk

MARK EGAN

I play a melodic groove style with focus on improvisation. I play five- string fretted and fretless basses because I like the possibilities that are available with a low B string. I also like the additional note choices that are available in each position on the fingerboard. I slap occasionally but my main focus is fingerstyle. I like the slap sound for specific styles of music. The secret of playing bass well is the same concept for playing any instrument well: practising, listening and paying attention to the moment, deeply studying the lineage and history of the instrument and being a team player. It takes a lifetime's dedication. My main basses are MV Pedulla Penta Buzz in fretted and fretless, as well as my Fender 1964 Jazz that I have recorded extensively on many recording sessions. My bass heroes are James Jamerson, Paul Chambers, Dave Holland, Jaco Pastorius, Chuck Rainey, John Paul Jones, Paul McCartney to name a few… There's no single greatest for me: they have all made major contributions to the bass lineage and I am continually inspired by them. The aspect of playing bass that continually draws me into the music is my love for being in the moment with the music. Those moments can be playing a groove or improvising. If you really pay attention to the music at hand, it is a very selfless and inspired place. My new album, *Direction Home*, comes out in March.

www.markegan.com



GEAR
BASSES MV Pedulla Penta Buzz Mark Egan Signature, Fender Jazz, Wan Bernadel upright
EFFECTS Markbass Chorus/Reverb, Lexicon 200 reverb, Lexicon PCM 42, Korg Multi EFX AX300B
AMPS Markbass Bass Multiamp Stereo, Markbass Big Bang, Markbass Little Mark III, Markbass Standard 102 HF cabinets

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GEAR
BASSES Fender Precision with Seymour Duncan Quarter-Pounder pickups
EFFECTS Tech 21 NYC VT
AMPS Gallien Krueger MB200 head, Gallien Krueger 210MBE and 115MBE cabs

DAI JOSEPH, THE SICK LIVERS

I would describe my bass style as awkward. I use a .73mm plectrum and only ever use really fast downward strokes. I do not slap, because it's witchcraft. Saying that, I would love to enroll into the Bootsy Collins Funk University. My first bass was a three-quarter-length Gibson SG copy, which I swapped an Adam & The Ants picture disc for. The fretboard snapped in half as I was attempting to play 'Smoke On The Water' – an omen, maybe. My favourite bass ever to date is my black American Standard Fender P, which my lovely wife bought me for Christmas a few years back. My bass heroes are Les Pattinson from Echo & The Bunnymen, Mike Watt, the amazing Kev Hopper from 80s band Stump, and Duff McKagan. The greatest bass player that ever lived is Sir Ian 'Lemmy' Kilmister. My band is Welsh rabble-rousing glam-punk (we call it 'glunk' in Wales – tidy) anti-heroes. We are currently writing an album and doing the odd gig and tour when our wives let us.

www.reverbnation.com/thesicklivers

GEAR
BASSES Fodera Monarch Deluxe 83 Classic, Fodera Imperial Elite Buckeye Burl
EFFECTS TC Electronic FlashBack Delay, Corona Chorus, Shaker, Hall of Fame Reverb, Polytune Tuner, Ditto Looper, Rodenberg GAS 707B Boost, EBS OctaBass, Soundblox Bass Envelope Filter
AMPS Markbass Little Mark 800, Markbass Standard 104 HR cabinet, Markbass MiniMark 802 Combo

OYTUN ERSAN, OYTUN ERSAN PROJECT

I play both four- and five-string bass because my four-string gives me a punchier sound while slapping, whereas my five gives me more range while soloing. I slap because I feel the rhythm the most while slapping. The secret of playing bass well is listening to the bass-lines in different kinds of music, practising scales in all keys as part of your daily routine and being able to feel the rhythm from deep inside. My first bass was a Fender Standard. My favourite bass ever to date is a Fodera Monarch four for slapping, and a Fodera Imperial Elite five for soloing and walking bass-lines. My bass heroes are Jaco Pastorius, James Jamerson and the teacher of teachers: Joe Hubbard. I believe that the greatest bass player that ever lived is Jaco Pastorius. If I could get the bass tone of any album released, I would choose Dave Weckl's *Master Plan* (1990) where Tom Kennedy grooves so hard and solos beautifully with his Fodera Emperor II signature bass. My band, Oytun Ersan Project, is heading to Europe in early 2015. My fusion album will be released in March.

www.facebook.com/OytunErsanOfficial

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NATURAL BORN WOMAN

AFTER 50 YEARS IN BUSINESS, ALL-GROWN-UP ROCK ICON SUZI QUATRO IS STILL PLAYING BASS HARDER THAN ANY OTHER THREE BASSISTS PUT TOGETHER. JOEL MCIVER HEADS TO QUATRO HQ FOR THE FULL LOW-DOWN

Photography: Tina K

If you need proof that the music industry was once a profitable place to operate, you could do worse than head to rural Essex, where Suzi Quatro – Michigan-born, but UK-based for decades – resides in a splendid mansion, the type that only 55 million album sales can buy. Ushered in by Suzi, we walk through corridors laden with gold discs, antique furniture and similar drool-worthy items until we reach the chosen interview room, where a certain Fender Precision is hanging on the wall next to the fireplace.

Right, that's enough cheesy, *Hello!* magazine-style domestic detail. *BGM* isn't here to admire the fixtures and fittings: we're here to talk bass, and specifically the kind of soul/Motown-influenced rock bass playing which made that Fender's owner a huge star throughout the 1970s and beyond.

Suzi, now 64, is evidently not to be messed with. Half a century of touring either turns an artist into lard or gives them a core of steel, and it's obvious which option she's taken. Asked what achievement she's proudest of, she tells us: "Lasting this long, and still being sane. I never fell into the rock'n'roll lifestyle. I'm not a druggie, and I'm not a drinker. I'm a rocker on stage, but off stage I'm normal."

Even so, life throws curveballs, and one particular incident a couple of years ago almost derailed Suzi's bass-playing career completely. "In 2012, I was getting on a plane in Kiev the morning after a gig," she tells us. "I was holding my gig bag, which was pretty heavy, because you don't want your stage clothes to get lost, so I take everything with me. I was climbing up the stairs, which were steel and unforgiving, picked up the bag, slipped and fell over. I landed on my right knee, which broke, rolled over on my left wrist, which also broke, and I landed on my chin as well."

Ouch... "I was out of commission for five months because of the opposite breaks in the right knee and the left wrist, so I had no balance," she adds. "I had to learn to walk again. As a bass player, it would have been much easier to play if my right wrist had been broken. Playing octaves with my left hand was agony, but the doctor made me do it again and again. The result was interesting, though. All musicians develop little detours: if we can't quite do something, we find a way to do it, like a little trick. I've got strong fingers, because I play very good piano, but I had to relearn with no cheating allowed. It was good, in a way. I'm back to full strength now."

We're here to talk about *The Girl From Detroit City*, her new 4-CD box set, released to celebrate the 50 years since she first stepped on stage with the Pleasure Seekers, a band which also included two of her sisters. "I worked very hard to get the box set right," she says. "I wanted to make sure that it was really representative of me from the age of 14. Fifty years, you know! I went right back to the very first single the Pleasure Seekers ever made. There's lots of unreleased stuff, like a track called 'Desperado' with Jeff Beck, which is just wonderful."

Looking at the long list of songs on the box set, which bass parts is she most pleased with? "I like the machine-like playing of 'She's In Love With You' (1979)," Suzi says. "It just doesn't waver. Very few people can play it like that and sing the song, because the singing goes behind the beat. That's awkward, it really takes skill. That and 'The Girl From Detroit City', a brand new song, which has an unforgiving Motown bass-line that you have to sing behind. They're probably the only two songs that I've had to practise singing and playing. I don't think about it, usually."

Grabbing an acoustic bass, Suzi powers through a descending line with octave fills, saying, "There's also this little bass riff in 'Walking Through The Changes', which is tasty. I wrote that song around the bass riff, and quite a few bass players get it wrong."

Pointing to the Precision on the wall, she explains: "My dad gave me that bass in 1964. They threw in an electric mandolin to make him buy the bass, and a Fender Bassman amp as well, so when we formed the Pleasure Seekers it was given to me. Everybody picked an instrument, but no one picked bass, so they told me I was going to be the bass player. I said 'OK!' and put it on, and it was so me. I'm a percussive person anyway, so I went to the bass and I found my stage instrument. It just suited me."

Suzi was pretty lucky to have a Precision as her first bass, we tell her, like she didn't know that already.

> "I WAS OUT OF COMMISSION FOR FIVE MONTHS BECAUSE OF THE OPPOSITE BREAKS IN THE RIGHT KNEE AND THE LEFT WRIST, SO I HAD NO BALANCE"

"Of course!" she replies. "Everybody else had cheap instruments. They all had this crap, but because I had a really cool bass, I had to be a good bass player. Plug the Precision into the board and it's done. No fiddling around with the EQ, it's done! There's no other bass in the world that does that. I've talked about this with Paul McCartney. He was so jealous when he heard I started on a Precision. He hated me, ha ha! That's quite a few years ago now."

Fame first came calling for Suzi when she moved to the UK in 1971, having been spotted by producer Mickie Most, who hooked her up with songwriters Nicky Chinn and Mike Chapman. Hit singles followed and Suzi's bass skills evolved fast. "First I played using my thumb like a pick, because nobody taught me any different," she recalls, "and then a bass player from a local band came over and showed me fingers on the song 'Money'. That was great because my thumb was bleeding. I just taught myself to play. I could read and write piano and percussion already, so I knew my chords and scales, and it wasn't a huge jump to another instrument. I didn't find it too difficult."

"I had my influences: Elvis at six years old was one of them," she adds. "I saw him aged six and I said, 'I want to be like him!' Otis Redding was a big influence too. But I just kind of planted my feet and there I was, with the bass slung low. Nobody else looked like that."

"EVERYBODY ELSE HAD CHEAP INSTRUMENTS. THEY ALL HAD THIS CRAP, BUT BECAUSE I HAD A REALLY COOL BASS, I HAD TO BE A GOOD BASS PLAYER"

Check YouTube for footage of Suzi on *Top Of The Pops* in 1974, when she played 'Devil Gate Drive' assisted by a different P-Bass to the one over in the corner. "I used Mickie Most's white Precision for *Top Of The Pops*, because it contrasted against the black suit I was wearing," she notes. When we tell her what a ballsy kid she was back then, she chuckles and says: "Yeah, and now I'm a ballsy old lady! You know, anybody can play the notes: it's down to the feeling. That's what you can't teach people. It has to come from within, and everything I do is that way."

"People ask me who my influences were on bass, and I tell them that my favourite is James Jamerson. My party trick is to say to any bass player, 'I'm going to put on 'How Sweet It Is' by Marvin Gaye for 10 seconds and then I want you to hum me the bass-line'. What they hum will be completely wrong. They hear 10 times the notes that Jamerson plays. He leaves big gaps. You think it's walking all the way through, but he isn't. I actually met him in the Motown studio when I was 16. I was showing off on the bass while they took a break, and Jamerson pushed down the intercom button and said, 'Not bad for a white chick!' Then he said, 'It's not what you play, it's what you don't play', and I never forgot that."

Suzi must be sick to death by now of journalists asking her about being the first female rock star, or even worse, how she fits into her famous leather catsuit on stage, so we'll swerve all that ancient, patronising nonsense and simply ask her what it was like being a girl who played rock back in the 70s.

"I wasn't the only girl musician around at the time," she observes, "although there weren't many, that's for sure. The girl groups all knew each other. When I look back on it now, a girl rocker – who was an actual musician – had to break through sooner or later. It happened to fall on my shoulders, and one of the reasons for that is that I took myself very seriously from day one. The bass is a tough instrument to master, but I got very good very quickly because I already played piano and percussion, so I had a head start."

She continues: "I never ever did gender, either: I still don't. When I first came out, I said to people, 'Do I look like a girl being a guy?' and they said that I just look natural. I wasn't trying to show that I could play like the guys – that wasn't my stance. It was just, 'This is me. I'm a girl. So what?' Nobody ever really challenged me – I think because they could see I took myself seriously. Whatever you give off is what you get back, that's my opinion."

Did Most, Chinn or Chapman ever give Suzi direction about her bass parts? "Jesus, no. Never. They'd be dead!" she laughs. "I'm not the kind of person to be told what to do. You can maybe make a suggestion and I'll take it on board and see if it's right or wrong. My style, my performance, whatever it is, is organic: I don't think about it. I'm very stubborn about this point. I don't like basses with lots of fiddly bits on them. I see the bass, and the drums, as the engine. Without them, you've got nothing. I don't want to be flash apart from at appropriate moments, unless you're a lead bass player like Jack Bruce, who played that way and he was wonderful."

This year Suzi will be playing festivals and executing a farewell Australian tour – not her last tour ever, she explains, just the last one Down Under. "My main stage bass is a Fender Jazz now, not an old one, which I saw in a shop and I grabbed," she says. "I won't take the old Precision on the road any more. To be honest, when I'm on stage doing my bass solo, which is always a big part of my show, the Jazz neck is a teeny bit slimmer. I don't mind either neck, actually, but when you want to race around and show off, the Jazz neck gives you a little extra edge."

What other gear has she got? "I take a Status out as a backup. The graphite neck makes you think you've died and gone to heaven. Then when you go back to the Fender, it's like having a young boyfriend and then going back to your husband, ha ha! I also have a pink Fender Telecaster bass, but I won't take that out either, because I bash it on stage. I have a belt on with my in-ears attached to it, which scratches it. It's better to have the Fender Jazz, which doesn't cost a fortune. I've also got a Les Paul Recording bass and two BC Riches: a Rich Bich and a red custom, which they made for me when we played on *Top Of The Pops*. For amps, I use Orange: they're very good. No effects. Bass is bass!"

Suzi also breaks out a five-string from time to time, she explains. "I love five-strings. As you get a little bit older, it's normal to lose one or two of your higher vocal notes. You can still hit them, but you don't want to do that when you're playing every night, because you'll blow your voice out. So I drop the bass note a little and use a five-string."

You may have seen Suzi busting out a slap line from time to time, and noticed that she does it with fingers pointed downwards rather than the conventional thumb style. "Let me show you how I do it," she

says, reaching for her acoustic and slapping out a Motown line. "I slap the way I learned, from double bass playing. Maybe I should have learned the usual way, but I'm quite stubborn about sticking to what I learned!" In the 80s, did she ever consider learning the standard Larry Graham/Mark King approach? "Yes and no. I stick to what I know I do best. For instance, I've never used a pick in my life, even when I play guitar."

So what is Suzi best known for these days? In America, it's quite possibly her stint on *Happy Days* from 1977 to '79, where she appeared toting a bunch of basses that would fetch a huge price nowadays, even if their sound quality wasn't exactly hi-fi. "I played my Gibson EB-0 on *Happy Days*, because it was authentic to the period," she remembers. "It was a nice bass and it's now in the British Museum with my jumpsuit, on loan. Live, though, it didn't quite have the balls. It's OK if you're doing an unplugged thing."

In this country and Europe, where Suzi commands a huge following, she's renowned for her live show – and among bass players, for the lengthy solo she delivers. "My solo has evolved over the years," she says. "I still try different things and find new lines: it lasts about eight minutes now. You need the right bass for that solo, though. For example, I like fretless but it's more of a studio instrument: live, there's too much room for error, especially when you're jogging across the stage and dancing and singing. You don't want to fuck up!"

Before we leave, Suzi shows us her forthcoming book of autobiographical poetry, *Through My Eyes*. "It's very raw and exposed," she explains. "I always turn anything painful into a song or a poem: that way the negative becomes a positive. Everything teaches you something." After this long as a rock musician, what advice does she have for bass players? "Listen, and find your space," she tells us. "You don't have to create your space, but you do have to find it." Amen to that.

The Girl From Detroit City is out now on Cherry Red.
Info: www.suziquatro.com

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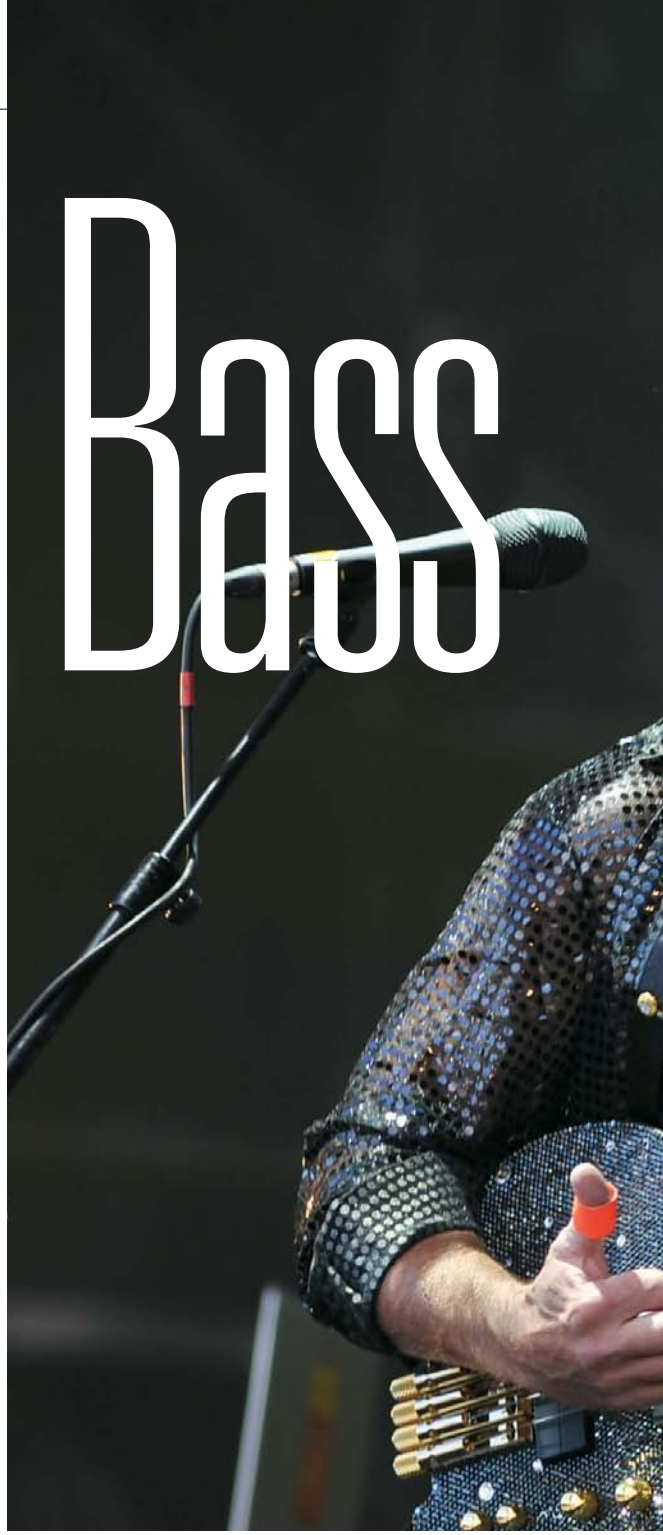

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THE LONDON BASS GUITAR SHOW 2015 IS SET TO ROCK LONDON'S OLYMPIA ON 7 AND 8 MARCH. MIKE BROOKS GETS A SNEAK PREVIEW FROM THE STARS OF THE SHOW – YOU READ IT HERE FIRST!

If you need proof that the music industry was once a profitable place: it's that time of year again, when the bass world takes over Olympia in West London for a whole weekend. The great, the good and the downright filthy (in bass playing terms, of course!) converge for a gathering that can only be described as a booty-wiggling, tooth-shaking leviathan of low frequencies, capable of levelling a major city. This year promises to raise the bar, if that were possible, not only in terms of gear and exhibitors but also with a stellar line-up of bass-playing glitterati offering the chance to get up close to your heroes, ask questions and tap into their collective bass-playing knowledge.

There are bass players and then there are forces of nature. Divinity Roxx (in association with Warwick) most definitely falls into the second category: her appearances at the LBGS 2015 on Saturday and Sunday promise to be nothing short of breath-taking, as she enthusiastically explains. "I'm really excited to be playing the show this year with my band. I've played London several times with Beyoncé Knowles, but I've never had an opportunity to play my solo show in London. I'm still working on exactly what my masterclass will entail, but we'll talk about playing and rapping or singing at the same time, and of course I'd love to answer any questions about touring and playing with artists while maintaining a solo career as a bass player. I'm looking forward to grooving a bit and talking about my experiences and having a cool time. I like to leave people with a sense that playing is fun – after all, that's why we all 'play' music, not 'work' music!"

Two-way communication certainly seems to be the order of the day when it comes to Divinity's masterclass, as she explains. "I love interacting with bass players, and anybody who wants to attend the class is more than welcome to join in the conversation. I'd prefer that to just sitting on stage playing and talking the whole time. I've never been to the LBGS, so I'm really excited about having the experience, meeting the other players that will be there and looking forward to some amazing playing and a good time. Bassists are usually the coolest players in the band – so when you get us all together, it's a really fun hang."

Divinity will be bringing her Warwick 'Divinity' Infinity and custom Streamer Stage II basses with her to the show and, having completed a European tour through the early part of 2015, we expect her to be in red-hot form at the show. Are there any words of wisdom that we mere mortals should take away from her appearances at the show? "Groove is and will always be the most important aspect of playing bass. Keep grooving, because that's what keeps the crowd moving." Wise words!

Having opened the first LBGS back in 2011, Mark King is no stranger to Olympia and needs no introduction. With Level 42 celebrating 35 years in the business in 2015, constant festival appearances in the UK and Europe and a regular touring schedule, the band is as busy as ever. This

year's appearance on Saturday will be a Q&A session with our own Joel McIver and promises to be something special for bassists and Level 42 fans alike. As Mark modestly says, "It's not really a masterclass I'm afraid – as I'm certainly no master! Members of the audience can ask me anything they like. I'll have my bass with me, of course, and I'll have the odd noodle, but not in a band setup as I did before. This might be a good opportunity to bring out some of the old girls – as in basses I mean, not past squeezes! Maybe we could dig up some of the old amps as well. This will be an opportunity for anyone to ask me about songs, Level 42, my technique or my fabulous taste in clothing! It should be a good laugh and hopefully we can all take something away from the afternoon."

2015 promises to be a busy year for Mark and the Level 42 boys, as he explains. "We're off to Japan in early February, then we're sitting in with Billy Cobham at Ronnie Scott's in late February. There's the London Bass Show of course, and then some great festivals around the UK and Europe through the summer, with a couple of shows at Indigo2 in London in September. I also have a ton of stuff to get finished in the studio, with a DVD from the *Sirens* tour in the pipeline, and the next instalment of *Sirens* itself, which is in arrears, due to me buggering off and enjoying myself instead of putting a decent day's graft in!"

As always, Mark has some positive words for old and new bassists alike. "Think positively, and turn those thoughts into actions. We are the captains of our own ship and can set our course accordingly. Although none of us know what lies over the horizon, with a positive outlook and a whole lot of love we can meet that unknown and prevail – or not. It's up to you!"

One man who never stands still for more than two minutes is Billy Sheehan, bassist extraordinaire, all-round nice guy and master technician: a bassist as happy to sit on the simplest groove as to showcase his immense technical ability on the instrument. Having performed at myriad clinics over the years, Billy's appearances at the show this year will give those in attendance the chance to see the man close up and in action. Constantly trying new things and working on ideas, Billy has this to say about his masterclass showcase. "I'm working on several new bass techniques and I'm excited to share what I've learned with everyone at the show. I've got lots to talk about regarding my gear setup too. My masterclasses and seminars are designed to help my fellow musicians: that's always the underlying and most essential aspect. I'll be looking to interact with the audience to the greatest extent possible!"

"THIS YEAR PROMISES TO RAISE THE BAR, IF THAT WERE POSSIBLE, NOT ONLY IN TERMS OF GEAR AND EXHIBITORS BUT ALSO WITH A STELLAR LINE-UP OF BASS-PLAYING GLITTERATI OFFERING THE CHANCE TO GET UP CLOSE TO YOUR HEROES"

Being a LBGS virgin, does the legend of low end have any surprises up his sleeves for us at the show? Maybe, or maybe not, it would seem! "If I told you, it wouldn't be a surprise! Seriously though, there's always something new – more evolution, more new ideas. I'm looking forward to the whole show. I always keep my eyes and ears open when it comes to gear, so hopefully I'll see some cool new gear and get to hear some awesome playing too."

2014 was a busy year for Mr Sheehan and 2015 looks like being equally relentless, with a new album from the Winery Dogs in the pipeline and a lot of touring to promote it. With decades of experience and thousands of shows behind him, those attending Billy's appearances will certainly glean some useful insights into the world of a constantly working professional bassist. "Art is freedom. Play the way you want, play what you like. Don't allow the small-minded to dictate how you should play, write, perform, dress, or live. Let's celebrate the greatest art form – music."

We welcome Stuart Hamm to London for his first LBGS appearances this year – and by the sound of it, the man is buzzed to be here. His masterclass and Live Stage set shouldn't be missed, as he elaborates. "My performance and masterclass will be one-man shows, talking about my musical upbringing and career, and how people I've met have influenced me. I'll add some humorous stories and discuss the physical aspects of playing, such as ergonomics, warm-up techniques, and injuries, and I'll talk about some new projects. I'd like to talk about my career, of which my solo career is but a small part of the whole, and how my playing on my solo material differs to playing in a band. I'm also looking forward to taking questions from the audience."

Despite a career at the top of his profession, it's great to know that Stuart is no different to most of us attending the show as he describes in no uncertain terms. "I'm looking forward to hanging out like a bass geek in between my performances, before and after, and I'm more than happy to answer any questions anyone has. It will be great to catch up with Billy Sheehan as we're good friends, and we've toured together before. And Divinity Roxx and I are on a tour together in 2015, so it will be good to see her too."

Equipped with his new Warwick basses, GHS strings and Hartke amps, Stuart will be making a big noise at the show and will also have copies of his latest album available. "By hook or by crook, I will be releasing my new album around the time of the LBGS, 2015 is starting to look busy!"

So what does all this add up to? Simply the best time any bass player can have when out and about in our capital city, that's what. Add legendary rockabilly bassist Lee Rocker to the mix – plus several artists still to be announced as we went to press – and there's no excuse for not being there. See you in March!

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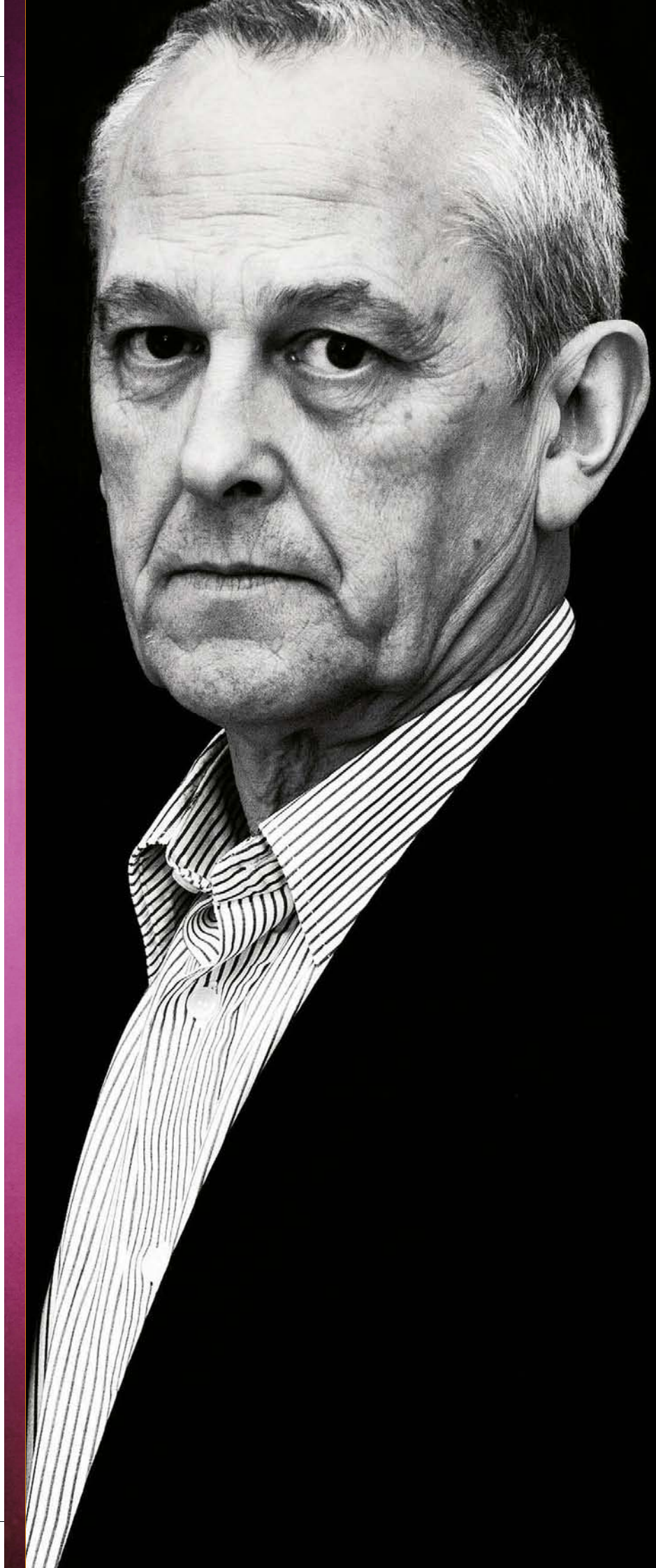
THE LONDON BASS GUITAR SHOW 2015
IN ASSOCIATION WITH BASS GUITAR MAGAZINE

Art of Bass

HORACE PANTER IS A CREATIVE EVERYMAN, HOLDING DOWN EFFORTLESS SKA BASS-LINES WITH THE SPECIALS AND COMPILING A BOOK OF HIS ARTWORKS. JOEL MCIVER MEETS HIM



Formed in 1977, split into factions in the following decade and now reunited since 2008, the Specials are revered among British and American ska and 2-Tone fans for their reggae- and soul-influenced songwriting, and among bassists for Horace Panter's immense, dexterous lines, which gave the music a bottom end often missing in songs of their era. A painter and teacher as well as a musician, Panter has a book of artwork out as we speak, simply titled *Art* and a fantastic insight into his creative personality.

When *BGM* spoke to him, he had just come off tour with the Specials. "The tour dates were fabulous," he says. "We opened with [1981 hit] 'Ghost Town', which I thought wouldn't work because it's such a downer, but it was epic. There were 11 people on stage for that song including horns and strings, and it was like a symphony orchestra. It was a real triumph. Nowadays we have mixed audiences. You get the people who came to see us back in the day, and then you get their children too, who are now 18 or whatever. It's a pan-generational spread, and they all have a riot."

Asked about bass matters, Panter informs us: "For this tour I got out my old faithful 1972 Fender Precision, which I bought in '75 for £160. It's now absolutely knackered: a lot of the finish is coming off, but it's the lightest guitar ever. I had some work done on it at my local music shop and the Fender rep was there: he said he'd never seen such a light Precision, because the wood had sweated out after being used so much. It was the one I played on the first Specials album and tour in 1979. My backup bass was the black Jazz that I used on the last tour, but I never used it once. Amps? I used to have an Ampeg SVT, but I couldn't lift it. I really couldn't! So I sold it and got a lighter Ampeg instead. I've got two 4x10s but I only use one of them. No effects. I don't do tap-dancing..."

Take a listen to any of the Specials' hits – 'Too Much Too Young', 'A Message To You Rudy', take your pick – and you'll immediately notice Panter's super-precise bass parts, which leave plenty of space like all the best reggae masters. To this day he doesn't deviate from those original bass-lines, he tells us: "I play the same parts every night and anchor the whole thing. The person who improvises the most in the Specials is John Bradbury, the drummer. I always maintain that reggae is like African drumming but on Western instruments. Everybody is playing rhythm. One reason I like reggae is because all the musical rules don't apply."

It's appropriate that a certain Motown-influenced bassist is one of Panter's heroes. "Andy Fraser was my first influence," he explains. "He was the first bass player who made me sit down and listen. He's still a big influence today. I love the way he uses melodies and will play the third note of a chord instead of the root, and stuff like that. I also loved 'Green Onions' and those really simple bass parts that work, and I obviously doff a cap to James Jamerson and Donald 'Duck' Dunn. Don't get me wrong – I think virtuosos are great. I love what people like Jaco Pastorius and Flea have done to raise the profile of the instrument, but it's not what I do."

Turning to *Art*, a remarkable collection of Panter's portraits and collages, how has Panter combined his art and music careers? "I met [original Specials keyboardist] Jerry Dammers at art school, so art has always been my hobby, and I taught art as a schoolteacher until the Specials reformed in 2008. I started doing it as a serious concern after that. Being in a pop group that travelled a lot was a great reason to see a lot of the world's great art galleries. When the Specials first went to New York, everybody else went clubbing – whereas I went to bed early so I could get up and go to the Guggenheim and the Museum Of Modern Art the next day."

Does Panter's philosophy as an artist overlap with his approach to playing bass, we ask? "I think it does, yes. In the 1950s there were the abstract expressionists, one of whom was Jackson Pollock, before pop art came along with Andy Warhol's soup-can pictures. The same happened in music: you had triple albums by Yes and ELP – and then along came the Ramones, playing songs that lasted 59 seconds."

"I'm of that pop art tradition: it's called elevating the mundane, where you paint pictures of everyday things and make them extraordinary. It also ties in with an interest I have in religious iconography. Just as the Specials combined punk and reggae, I'm combining bits of pop art with other things. We played ska with the energy of the Clash, and that goes for my approach to art too."

***Art* by Horace Panter is out now on Foruli.**
Info: http://foruli.co.uk

FREE YOUR MIND

. . . AND THE BASS WILL FOLLOW, DOUG WIMBISH OF LIVING COLOUR TELLS JOE SHOOMAN

Pic by Karsten Staiger

Fresh from a brilliantly received tour with Living Colour, multi-stylist and producer Doug Wimbish is an inspiring blend of humility and energy. The pioneering player muses on the different tools available for the purveyor of the low frequency, starting with the instruments themselves. "Some people's basses are their character, and they are the character of the bass. They have their vibes and what they like, and I love that stuff," he says.

He should know, having wielded his signature Spector bass with a host of names including Mick Jagger, Madonna, George Clinton, Depeche Mode, Annie Lennox, Jeff Beck, the Sugarhill Records house band, Joe Satriani, Mos Def and more. While he has a well-documented collection of basses, he has a definitive reason for choosing which one to play for any given song.

"Let's go back to Jimi Hendrix, Sly & The Family Stone, my roots: there's definitely that jazz vibe," he muses. "I am a character player and I learn how to play characters: how would it be if I was Jimi Hendrix on bass. How would Jimi or Sly approach it? How would Bootsy approach it? All these cats play different instruments even though we know them mainly for one. Marcus Miller played bass clarinet, and played his ass off: he wrote the lines out and played with Miles Davis.

"He is a real musician. He is trained like that. I just wanted to be that musician that was able to do it. If someone needed me to program something, I could do it; if they need me to run ProTools or Logic, I can do that; if they need me to strike the tape and get tones up, I can do that."

Over his four-decade career, Doug has been at the forefront of musical explosions including hip-hop, electronica, funk-rock and pop. He says that he was always there with ears and mind firmly open as to what was happening and how he could implement ideas in his own session and studio work.

"I was in the situation to be able to observe and absorb it. I believe that my vibe came from the people I was around. Sometimes they'll tell me to just do my own thing, and others they will tell me to do exactly what they want."

For example? "I'm working with Mick Jagger and Simon Phillips, a killer drummer, and we're writing songs – Jagger songs – and I know that he wants a certain kind of vibe. My way of working with Mick is to follow those lips, man. He is so good at humming those bass-lines. I'm like, 'Yo Micko-lo, play something', and he's humming this thing," laughs the Connecticut-born genius. "After a while you know somebody and you get a dossier on what they are saying. And I know exactly what he's talking about, where to begin it, it's a good study point."

Another example is when he's playing with Jeff Beck: at one point, says Doug, the two will just start laughing with each other with glee at nailing the perfect groove. "He lets me do my thing, but I know he needs that solid shit. I mean – he's Jeff Beck! I don't want to cross those lines: I am digging playing all those lines and he gave me my first rock break, first busted me out. I learnt a lot about feel and technique, how you play with your thumb and fingers, from Jeff. He's got his own feel."

That's the crux of the art of the bass, Doug notes, as we ask him for advice for players who may just be starting out. "For the youngsters and the kids – find your sound," he declares. "Find your interest: be that individual; go for what you feel you wanna do. If you wanna play a certain style, you do that and don't let anybody else tell you any different.

"But if you want to do something else, there's people that are there for you that you can vibe off. Music is free. You go for it. I will be here to support you: you will have a fan, believe me."

Info: www.dougwimbish.com

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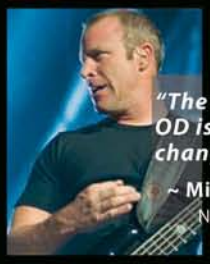

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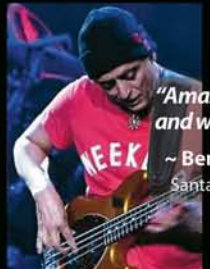

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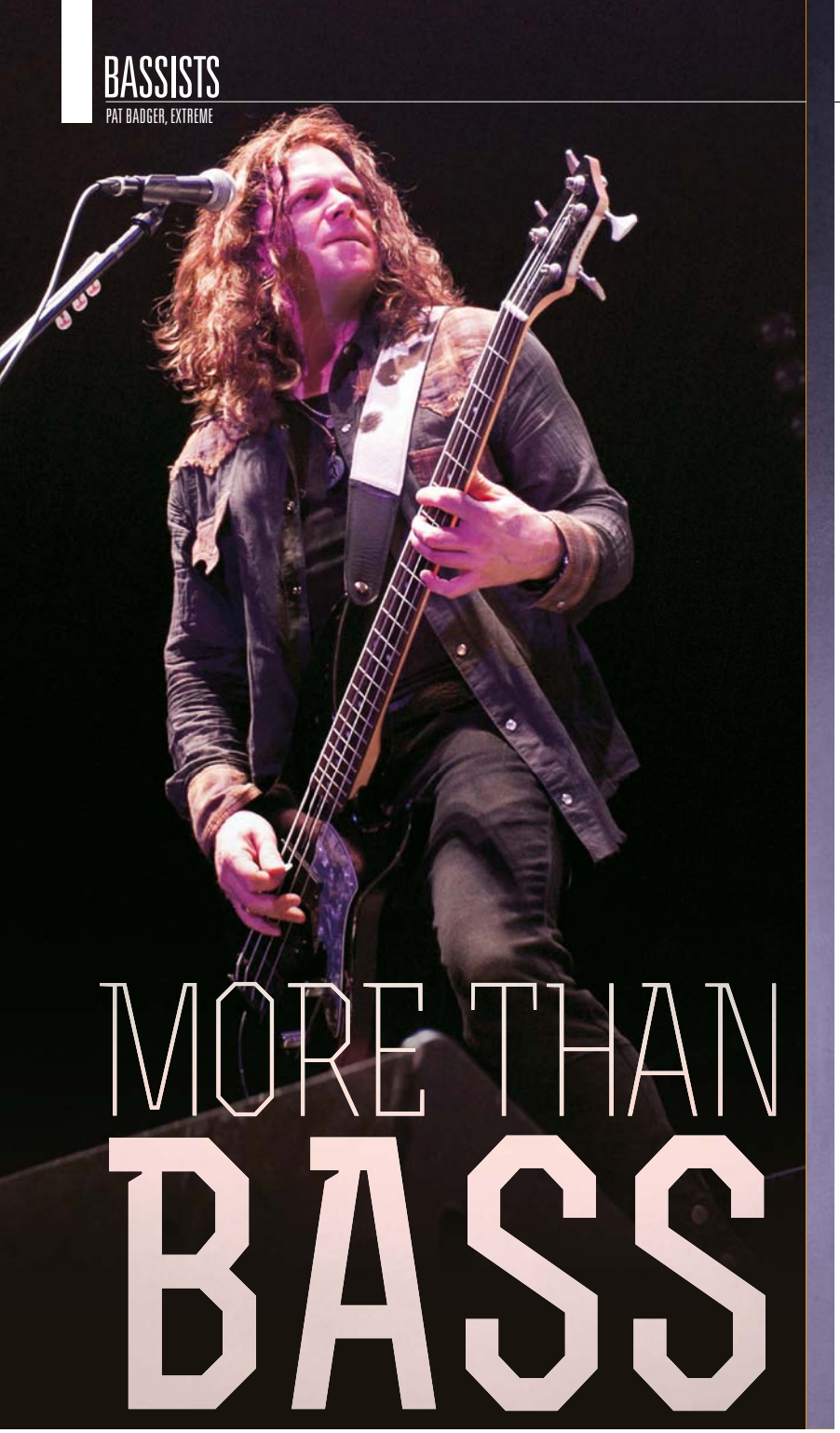

MORE THAN BASS

EXTREME BASSIST PAT BADGER TALKS TO BEN COOPER ABOUT LIFE AFTER ROCK STARDOM

The music industry is a fickle beast. One minute you're flavour of the month, the next you're a virtual pariah – but if you hang around for long enough suddenly you're cool all over again, with teenagers coming to your shows. Just ask Pat Badger of Extreme, who has that pragmatic, down-to-earth attitude for which Bostonians are famous...

After Extreme – Badger plus singer Gary Cherone, guitarist Nuno Bettercourt and their then-drummer Paul Geary – experienced monstrous success with their second album, *Pornograffitti* (1990), they suddenly found themselves on the outside looking in with the advent of grunge. "When grunge hit, all the bands that had come out in the late 80s and early 90s were considered passé," Badger explains from his Boston home.

It's been a long and at times rocky road, one that all started when a young Pat began to hang out just a little bit too often in a local guitar shop. He'd heard through a friend about a local guitar maker who made basses for Chris Squire, Jim Mouradian. Mouradian also ran a guitar shop and after hanging out in the shop after school day in, day out he plucked up the courage to ask for a job. "I used to do custom paint jobs and finishing on the guitars. That's where I met Nuno, and when Extreme needed a new bass player, that's how that all came together."

Pat still plays Mouradian basses to this day, and particularly cherishes a black number that he played at the famous Freddie Mercury tribute concert. 'That one will go with me to the grave!' he laughs.

By the time he joined Extreme, they were already the go-to support act for touring bands coming through the Boston area and the chemistry was instant, as he explains. "Within a couple of weeks I was playing my first gig and then within a month we were cutting demos of songs in the studio."

Pornograffitti remains the band's biggest success, and is full of Pat's thunderous bass-lines, with a gritty tone to die for – which he puts down to using a pick and driving his amps hard. Back then he wasn't picky about what gear he used, but these days he's using Gallien-Krueger for their reliability and tube preamp tone, plus a SansAmp Bass Driver for added kick.

Despite the album's incredible blend of hard rock and funk, it is best remembered worldwide for the ballad 'More Than Words'. Did the band find that song a mixed blessing? "Well, how can you really complain about having a hit and selling millions of records?" says Badger with a laugh. "But at the same time I think a lot of people couldn't work out what Extreme were. It was so different to the usual power ballads of the time. I think that song really did become bigger than band."

Although Extreme's next album, *III Sides To Every Story* (1992), went gold, its slick production and 70-piece orchestra was a little at odds with the raw sounds favoured by record execs, and with less support the album didn't perform as it should have. By the time *Waiting For The Punchline* emerged in 1995, the band had little support from their label and was struggling internally. "We'd been on the road so long I think we were all tired of it. And Nuno wanted to do his solo stuff, so we just called it a day for then," recalls Badger.

He then dabbled in other musical projects: Super TransAtlantic, with members of Saigon Kick, released a single album, and he also handled bass for Tribe Of Judah with Extreme bandmate Gary Cherone. Oh, and he also ran an alpaca farm... "Well I didn't want to just retire and do nothing, and I had a farm with a barn and all that," he explains. "I got interested in alpacas, so I just dived in and began breeding them. I still have about a dozen. They're like fancy lawn ornaments!"

Extreme's bandmembers all remained close friends and have been working together sporadically since they went on hiatus in the mid-90s. How does Badger find the rehearsing and touring process after all these years? "It's been easy, really. These songs are ingrained in my mind, so as long as my fingers are in shape I don't struggle with them."

Badger recently released a solo album, funded through Pledge Music. "I had a really successful time on the platform," he says. "It gives a musician like me a way to make a record and get it out there, which otherwise would never happen.'

It seems that waiting for the punchline has paid off for Badger, and Extreme too, as they find their second wind in a rapidly changing musical race. It's good to know that in a world of throwaway pop, some guys are still going strong.

Info: www.extreme-band.com

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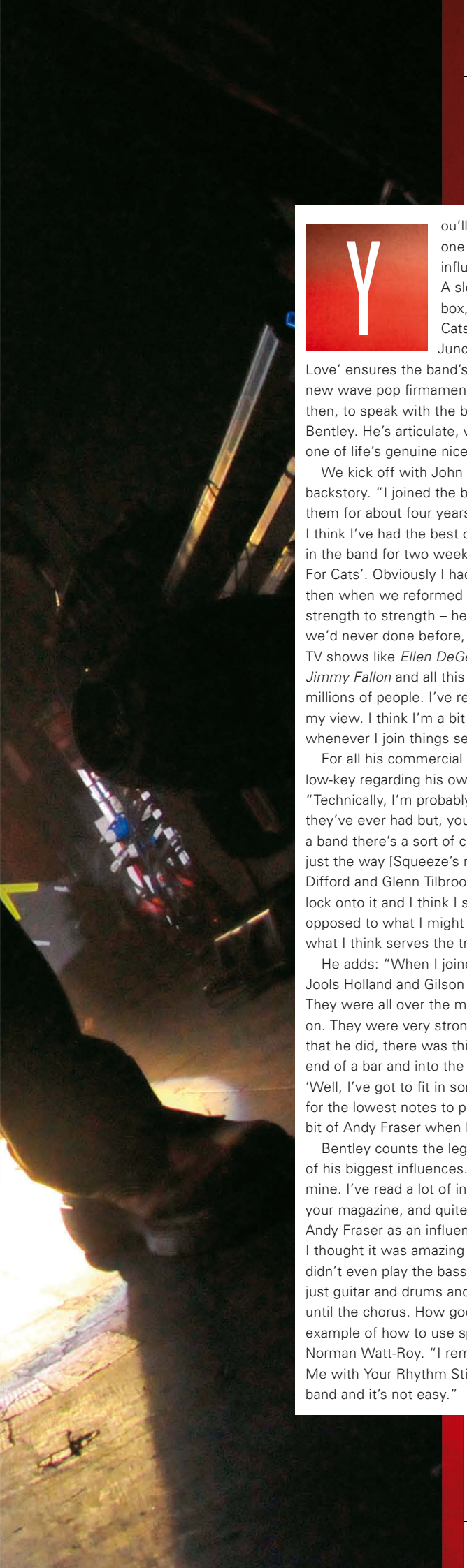
STILL COOL

HARRY PATERSON MEETS JOHN BENTLEY OF SQUEEZE

Pic by David Bailey at www.packetofthree.com



You'll know Squeeze, of course, one of the UK's most influential and iconic pop acts. A slew of hits, right out of the box, starting with 'Cool For Cats' and taking in 'Up The Junction' and 'Labelled With Love' ensures the band's permanent place in the new wave pop firmament. It was a genuine treat, then, to speak with the band's bassist, John Bentley. He's articulate, warm and enthusiastic – one of life's genuine nice guys.

We kick off with John filling in his remarkable backstory. "I joined the band in 1979. I was with them for about four years. As far as I'm concerned, I think I've had the best of Squeeze. I'd only been in the band for two weeks when we released 'Cool For Cats'. Obviously I had quite a long break, and then when we reformed in 2007, we went from strength to strength – headlining festivals which we'd never done before, playing in America, doing TV shows like *Ellen DeGeneres*, *Late Night With Jimmy Fallon* and all this sort of thing, playing to millions of people. I've really had the best of it, in my view. I think I'm a bit of a talisman for them; whenever I join things seem to go quite well!"

For all his commercial success, Bentley is low-key regarding his own undoubted talent. "Technically, I'm probably not the best bass player they've ever had but, you know, when you've got a band there's a sort of chemistry, isn't there? It's just the way [Squeeze's main songwriters] Chris Difford and Glenn Tilbrook write their music. I lock onto it and I think I supply what's needed, as opposed to what I might want to play myself. I play what I think serves the track best."

He adds: "When I joined the band, there was Jools Holland and Gilson [Lavis, drums] and Glenn. They were all over the music. There was a lot going on. They were very strong and Gilson, with the fills that he did, there was this sound. He'd go over the end of a bar and into the next one. So I thought, 'Well, I've got to fit in somewhere'. I usually look for the lowest notes to play and then I throw in a bit of Andy Fraser when I can."

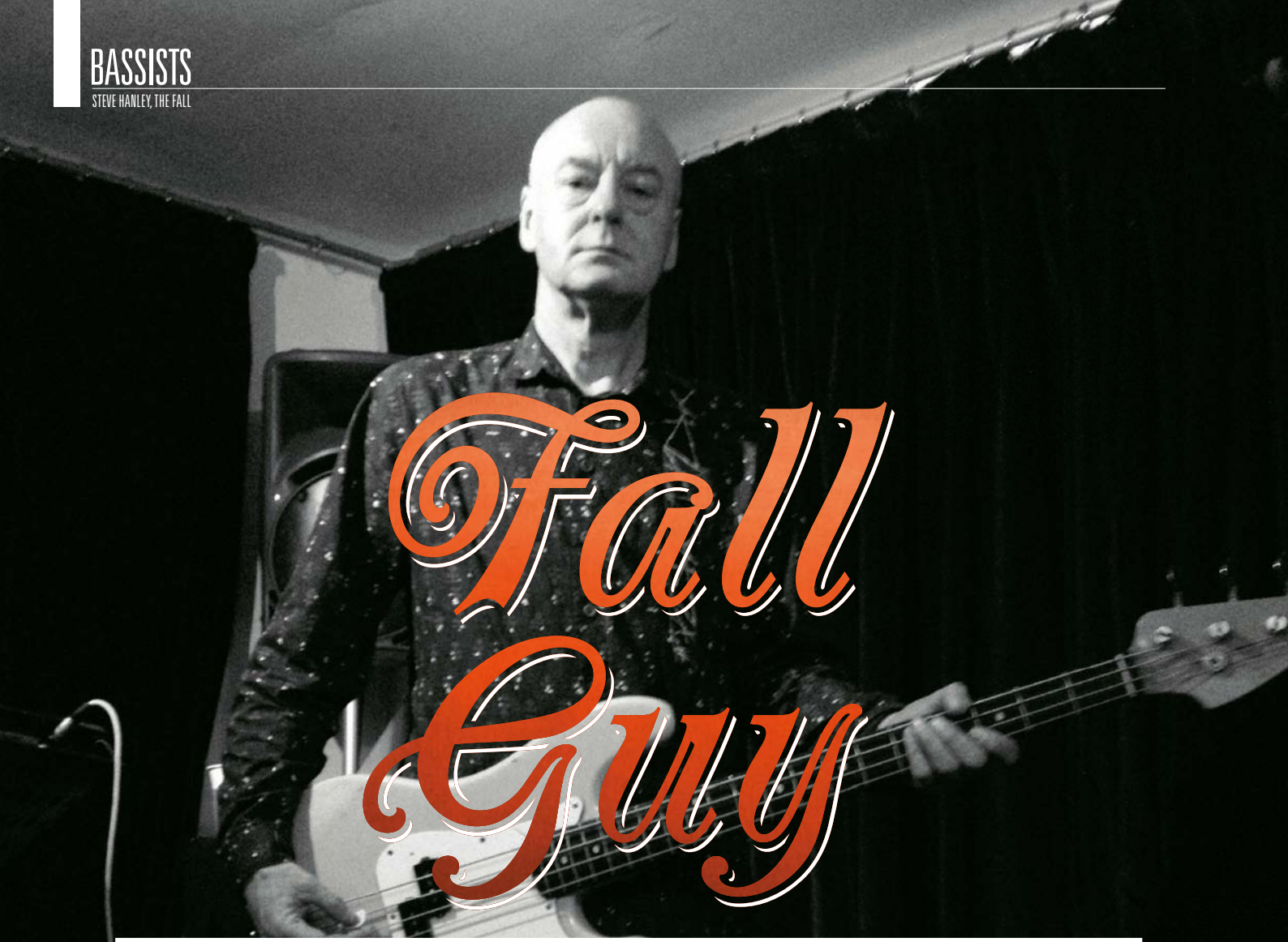
Bentley counts the legendary Free man as one of his biggest influences. "He's a huge favourite of mine. I've read a lot of interviews with bassists in your magazine, and quite a lot them seem to cite Andy Fraser as an influence. He was quite sparse. I thought it was amazing that on 'All Right Now' he didn't even play the bass in the first verse! There's just guitar and drums and he didn't even come in until the chorus. How good is that? It's a fantastic example of how to use space." Another favourite is Norman Watt-Roy. "I remember trying to learn 'Hit Me with Your Rhythm Stick' to play with a covers band and it's not easy."

> "WHEN I JOINED THE BAND, THERE WAS JOOLS HOLLAND AND GILSON [LAVIS, DRUMS] AND GLENN. THEY WERE ALL OVER THE MUSIC. THERE WAS A LOT GOING ON"

In terms of gear, John's a Markbass loyalist. "I've got an endorsement with Markbass. I couldn't use anything else. I really like it. It sounds great. I use a combo, a CMD102P. It's two 10-inch speakers with a 300-watt amp, which is absolutely brilliant for little gigs. When I play with Squeeze I add their big cab, a 151HR: when you put the two together you've got 500 watts, which is enough to play the really big stages. I'm very happy with the sound of that. Instrument-wise I've still got the Fender Precision, which I used on *East Side Story* (1981). It's a 1961. I still use that for recording and if I do any recording for anyone else, anyone that wants that sound. I've got a spare, a Music Man Stingray, which is an original 1976. That's kind of funky: it's got a really punchy sound. I generally use it as a spare but sometimes I'll play it all night if I fancy it. I've recently bought a Kala U-Bass; it's one of these little ukulele basses. When Squeeze does their acoustic set I pick up the U-Bass. Everyone comments on what a brilliant sound it is. It comes across a little like a double bass. It's got rubber strings. It's really weird technology: when you pull the strings it's like a bow and arrow. You literally pull 'em, like you're aiming a bow and arrow."

This leads us to John's new album, *Based On A True Story*, a vinyl-only release. He explains, "I'm always writing songs, so I picked the best 14 – and the reason I did that was that all the Beatles' albums had 14 tracks. I hadn't formally decided to do the album on vinyl until I got a call from a guy at the record company and he offered me this deal and said it was going to be exclusively on vinyl. I thought that was great! I'd always wanted to have a proper 12-inch vinyl record. All the albums I love – the Grateful Dead and Crosby, Stills & Nash – and there's my album next to them, part of that history."

The first of Bentley's solo albums to contain lyrics and eschew the instrumental-only format, *Based On A True Story* – featuring liner notes by Glenn Tilbrook – is out now on Plane Groovy. All the cool cats are grabbing it…



Fall Guy

STEVE HANLEY SERVED MANY LONG YEARS IN THE ICONIC POST-PUNK, POST-ROCK, POST-EVERYTHING BAND THE FALL AND HAS WRITTEN ABOUT IT IN A NEW AUTOBIOGRAPHY. JOEL MCIVER MEETS HIM

"Twenty years in the Fall and you've got to write a book before you get in a bass magazine!" chortles Steve Hanley in good humour. His autobiography, *The Big Midweek: Life Inside The Fall*, out now on Route Books, addresses the perils and pitfalls of playing bass with the mercurial bandleader Mark E Smith, but it's far from a catalogue of complaints. Hanley's book makes it clear that travelling the world in a major 80s band was also a hell of a lot of fun.

Despite Smith's leadership, Hanley had a lot of leeway when it came to writing bass parts. The music allowed plenty of space for his lines to fill, as fans of the early Fall albums will know. Hanley agrees, saying: "The original line-up played a kind of weird reggae, where the bass player was playing the tune and the guitarist was playing the rhythm."

Hanley's rich tone was a feature of the band's sound, although he doesn't go into much detail about this in his book, for very good reason... "I don't talk about the tone, because I don't know how I got it," he chuckles. "I've been asked a lot about it, so I've had to think about it, which I've never done before. I only picked up a bass a year and a half before I joined the Fall. I didn't really know what a bass was, so to make up for my lack of musical knowledge I think I overcompensated. When we were recording, Mark would say 'You don't need all them notes', but I just like to put a tune somewhere in the bass parts."

The fact that Hanley enjoyed a distinctive bass tone is all the more remarkable, given his boss's habit of tweaking his amp EQ in the middle of live performances. "He still does it!" laughs Hanley. I used to think, 'What's the point in me spending all afternoon soundchecking and trying to get it right if you're just going to come up and fuck with it?'"

Mellow about this now that a few years have passed, Hanley muses: "I think he'd rather have a gig that was either great or terrible than one where the musicians are just going through the motions."

After the Fall, Hanley continued to tour, but after a decade the thrill of lugging gear around began to fade, he says. "I was with [ex-Inspiral Carpets singer] Tom Hingley & The Lovers for 10 years. After years of carrying my bass up and down the fire escape at two in the morning at clubs in Hull and Doncaster, I sort of came to the end of it all. I was working my day job and the book at the same time."

But there's a new project ahead, he says, brought about by the publication of *The Big Midweek*. "We had the launch for the book in Manchester last year, and 12 ex-Fall members came, including [singer and guitarist] Brix Smith, so I've just started rehearsing with Brix. The new band is going to be called Brix & The Extricated. This wouldn't have happened without the book – it's been powerful."

Gear wise, Hanley will be sticking mostly to tried-and-tested gear, although there's an added modern twist. "I've got the old Ampeg SVT that I've been using for years," he says "but I've added two Hartke 4x10 cabinets. I'll use the old Fender Precision. I won't take a backup – the old Fender never lets me down and I'm sure there'll be another bass in the venue!" Spoken like a man who's seen his fair share of on-stage problems – and survived the lot of them.

Info: http://thebigmidweek.wordpress.com

Darkglass Electronics
Your vision, our gear.
"The Vintage Deluxe is brilliant. Sounds sweet, great playability and sits well in the mix, letting the low end do its job while heavily distorted"
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ENFIELD LIONHEART
English Rose 4 and 5

A ROSE BY ANY OTHER NAME, YOU SAY? JOEL MCIVER PLUCKS TWO SUPER-SOUPED-UP ENFIELDS

Enfield
www.enfieldguitars.com

You may recall the coverage we gave the Enfield range a year or so ago, when the veteran Brit luthiers (now celebrating 20 years in business) brought out their new Lionheart Standard bass range and Super-Quad pickup system. We were highly impressed with both, and here we have a couple of top-of-the-range, extras-packed Lionhearts to kick off the new year with.

Note that you don't have to spend over £3,000 to bag yourself a Lionheart: these two beauties are deliberately loaded with extras to allow us to experience everything that the Enfield range can do. If you don't need all the extra bells and whistles, you'll be very happy with a 'basic' Lionheart, which comes in at £1,650 (four-string) and £1,890 (five). Enfield will be happy to build a custom bass for you with all, some or none of the extra features included in this review. Think of it as a pizza with custom toppings, except a few hundred times more expensive and way cooler when worn around your neck.

BUILD QUALITY

Our review models are both based around sublime bits of wood for body and neck, engineered and finished to perfection and eminently strokeable straight out of the bass. Pick either bass up and you'll note its weight: it isn't so hefty that it'll do you an injury, but players in search of a lightweight bass should look elsewhere. Perfectly balanced on strap or lap, these basses ooze quality at all points, as indeed they should for this price.

As always, it's not just the wood that impresses us when we're reviewing bass guitars, although the sleek mahogany and rosewood used here are obviously crucial. True craftsmanship comes through when details such as the battery compartment, the 'English Rose' inlay text and the remarkably smooth and solid tuners and bridge are taken care of. The Hipshot gold hardware and controls exude a kind of extrovert showy-offness that we love, although – like the amazing LEDs on the side and face of the neck – these cosmetic elements are entirely down to your own taste. Talking of those LEDs, be aware that they cost £580, a lot of money for pure aesthetics. But what the hell, they're lovely...

SOUNDS & PLAYABILITY

Before you even plug in, what fun you can have with the LEDs, which light the bass up like a Christmas tree, especially if you draw the curtains. How great they'd look on stage at the O2... if your band ever made it that far... Wait, stop dreaming for a second and get down to business.

The controls here are master volume with passive option when pulled, an active bass/treble and mid boost/cut preamp with the bass and treble stacked on one pot. Before we get into the active mode, and indeed the three options for each pickup, have a play in passive mode. Unboosted, the Lionheart sounds solid, reliable and relatively wide-ranging in tone, although of course this is a mere shadow of the performance it gives you when you tweak the volume pot and you slip into active mode. Those top and bottom end boosts are seriously powerful, giving you a ton of tone options before you even consider the Super-Quads.

But who are we kidding? You'll probably buy a Lionheart just for its amazing pickups. As you'll recall from our previous reviews, with the flick of a switch each unit changes from a split-coil configuration (plus red LED), to single coil (green) to humbucker (blue). As Stuart Clayton said in his Lionheart Standard review, after a while you start to think of each tone as red, green or blue, a curious side effect which really grows on you. Here, of course, we have two pickups, and so we can combine the three configurations any way you like, offering us 15 pickup combinations. While there are far too many options to list here, especially when you throw the active boosts into the mix, we have our favourites, including a tight, staccato sound with plenty of balls that you get when you select a red and a green tone. We mean, a split and a single...

CONCLUSION

We had no hesitation whatsoever in recommending the standard Lionheart Standard basses to you in our earlier review, and we see no reason to change that now. They're utterly wonderful instruments that you can enjoy for a lifetime. Now, would we recommend these extras-loaded English Rose variants? Absolutely, assuming certain criteria. One, you have tons of money. Two, you want loads and loads of tone options.

To be absolutely clear, let's look at the extra charges over and above the cost of the bass itself. The English Rose neck is £400. The mahogany body with forward-facing rosewood is also £400, or £600 if you want the back of the body to have the rosewood too. The gold hardware is £180. The three-band Glockenklang preamp is only £40, so you'd be nuts not to add that option. And as we've seen, the LEDs will cost you £580. Pick and choose the features you need, and bear in mind that a basic Lionheart four-string with the English Rose neck comes in at 'only' £2,050: a lot of bass for the outlay.

You'll get a great bass whatever options you choose: the only real question is how far you want to go towards the fully-loaded, ultimate instrument – like the ones we have here. It's been a pleasure to play them.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

PRICE | £3,288, £3,528
Made in | UK
BODY | Mahogany core, rosewood top and back
NECK | Rosewood with front and side LEDs
NECK JOINT | Bolt-on, five-screw
NUT WIDTH | 43mm, 51mm
FINGERBOARD | Rosewood
FRETS | 24
PICKUPS | Sims Super-Quad x 2 with three-way configuration switches
ELECTRONICS | Three-band Glockenklang preamp
CONTROLS | Volume (push/pull active/passive mode), active bass/treble, mid boost/cut, LEDs on/off switch
HARDWARE | Hipshot gold
WEIGHT | 3.5kg, 3.8kg
CASE/GIG BAG INCLUDED? Yes
LEFT-HAND OPTION AVAILABLE? Yes

WHAT WE THINK

PLUS | Where to start? These basses are close to flawless
MINUS | Do you really need all those tone options?
OVERALL | Gorgeous instruments that cost the earth, with high-quality features that repay that cost with state-of-the-art tone and playability

BGM RATING

BUILD QUALITY
SOUND QUALITY
VALUE

The new HD Series.

For when it's your job to look after the bottom line.

INTRODUCING HARTKE HD SERIES BASS COMBOS

Whether you're performing on late night TV, in a jazz club, on a rock stage or simply practicing in a rehearsal space or bedroom, Hartke's patented HyDrive speakers are now affordable to everyone. Available in four distinctive models, the HD Series Combos offer power, precision and punch, no matter what style of music you play.

For your nearest stockist go to www.korguk.com/hartke

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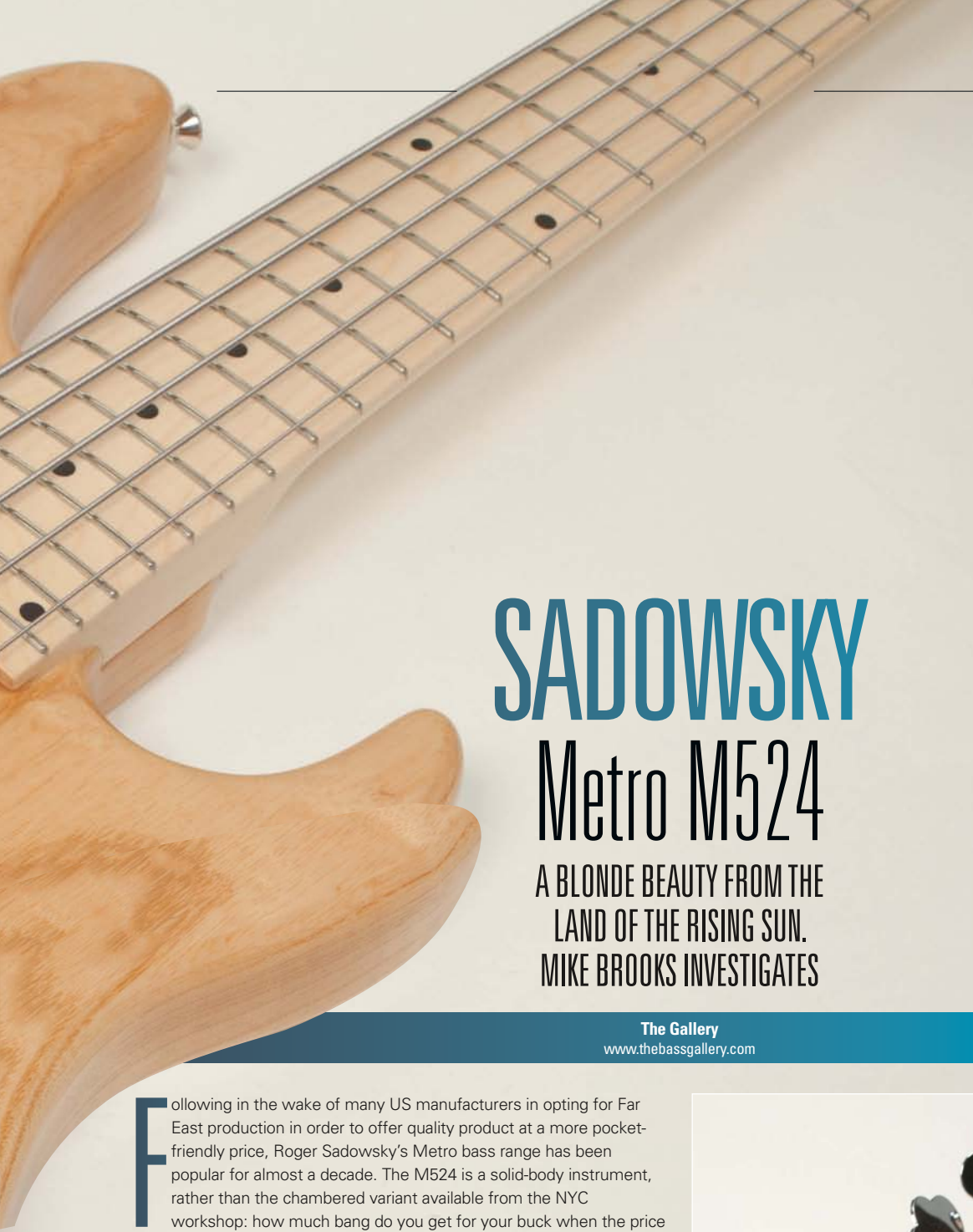
Hartke
SERIOUS TONE™

HartkeUK HartkeUK



SADOWSKY
Metro M524

A BLONDE BEAUTY FROM THE LAND OF THE RISING SUN. MIKE BROOKS INVESTIGATES

The Gallery
www.thebassgallery.com

Following in the wake of many US manufacturers in opting for Far East production in order to offer quality product at a more pocket-friendly price, Roger Sadowsky's Metro bass range has been popular for almost a decade. The M524 is a solid-body instrument, rather than the chambered variant available from the NYC workshop: how much bang do you get for your buck when the price tag is a tad under £2,250?

BUILD QUALITY

There's no disputing the high-quality craftsmanship here. The Metro's comfortable proportions benefit its neatly sculpted body, with subtle chamfering to the top body bout and deep contouring to the rear, while the lower cutaway offers unrestrained access to the upper frets of the 24-fret neck. The swamp ash body timber is very nicely figured, with the natural honey blonde tones shown off by the gloss finish. The graphite-reinforced neck feels extremely sturdy, with the four-bolt neck attachment doing its job admirably and the tight neck pocket showing no sign of any gaps.

The bleach blonde maple neck benefits from a vintage thin matte nitro finish, a point which luthier Roger Sadowsky believes improves his instruments, although he is quick to point out that if the neck finish begins to wear, this is not a defect, it is intentional. Black position markers have been used on the front and side of the neck; the rounded fret ends and gently rolled fingerboard provide a comfortable neck with no sharp fret ends in evidence; and although the fingerboard is broad (48mm at the nut with 19mm string spacing), this is compensated for by the sleek neck profile, although the depth of the neck offers a substantial feel. Being a five-string instrument, naturally there is some moderate neck dive, but this is remedied as soon as it's placed on a strap.

Chrome headstock hardware, including Hipshot elephant ear machine

heads, and a vintage bridge are matched with a black control set (volume, pickup pan, stacked bass and treble controls and a push/pull vintage tone control [VTC] operable in both active and passive modes) and a pair of Sadowsky hum-cancelling soapbar pickups. Taking a quick peek inside, the control cavity is well shielded, neat and tidy, with the cabling tied back.

PLAYABILITY AND SOUNDS

Acoustically, this bass is lively, bright and vibrant from the off and it resonates very clearly, which is no bad thing. As a Sadowsky, you expect a certain level of comfort, and this bass seriously delivers in that particular department. It's reassuringly easy to get to grips with and difficult to put down, in no small part due to the one-piece maple neck that is a real joy to play.

Surprisingly, once plugged in, the raucous, throaty delivery I was expecting was tempered somewhat. If anything this bass comes across as a rather refined, traditional vintage-sounding instrument, rather than the all-guns-blazing, hyper-modern sound which I had envisaged. With the bass EQ set flat (EQ controls at zero, and the VTC set fully clockwise), the vanilla tone is perfectly usable in its own right, but adding some EQ boost reinforces the overall delivery. At no point does the treble control offer overpoweringly sparkly, glassy highs: this may or may not appeal to different players.

> "IT RETAINS ALL THE HALLMARKS OF ROGER SADOWSKY'S OFFERINGS SO FAR AND AS A WORKING INSTRUMENT IT WOULD BE A FINE CHOICE"

Although the bass and treble boost offer significant headroom to play with, the VTC is the icing on the cake in terms of tone shaping – although again, it isn't offering tonal extremes. In passive mode, it's a godsend as it offers some much needed light and shade to your sound. It's a sensitive yet subtle control that requires some experimentation on the part of the player if its best use with regard to each pickup is to be found.

The more I played this bass, the greater its appeal became apparent. The fact that the circuit augments rather than saps the traditional tones is a plus: perhaps more circuit manufacturers should take heed. No matter what style of playing I threw at it, the bass performed very impressively and I can certainly see it appealing to those looking for powerful, vintage tones.

CONCLUSION

The M524 sounds impressive, its looks are fashionably understated and there is much to like about this bass. It retains all the hallmarks of Roger Sadowsky's offerings so far and as a working instrument it would be a fine choice. The only 'But…' is the price: at over £2,000, you could have a bass custom-built to your specification. Maybe this bass lacks that little something which would knock you off your feet. Nevertheless, it's a fine instrument and certainly worth investigating.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

PRICE | £2,247
COLOUR | Natural
BODY | Swamp ash
NECK | Maple
FINGERBOARD | Maple
PICKUPS | Two Sadowsky hum-cancelling soapbar pickups
ELECTRONICS | Sadowsky two-band EQ preamp with vintage tone control
CONTROLS | Volume, pickup pan, bass/treble boost only (stacked), vintage tone control with active/passive selector (push/pull)
TUNERS | Hipshot elephant ear tuners
BRIDGE | Vintage style
MADE IN | Japan
NUT WIDTH | 48mm
NECK JOIN | Bolt-on, four-bolt
SCALE LENGTH | 34" (864mm)
FRETS | 24
WEIGHT | 4.28kg (9lb 6oz)
LEFT HAND MODEL AVAILABLE? No
GIGBAG/CASE | Semi-hardcase

WHAT WE THINK

PLUS | Highly usable tones with a high-quality B-string delivery: comfortable and extremely playable
MINUS | Lacks the 'X factor' at this price
OVERALL | A sound performer, classy without being too flash

BGM RATING

BUILD QUALITY
SOUND QUALITY
VALUE

PROMENADE MUSIC

01524 410 202
www.promenademusic.co.uk

4 String Basses

breedlove

11818 - Breedlove BJ350/SMe4 Electro Acoustic
10067 - Brian May Bass in Cherry with Gig Bag

Fender

13613 - Fender 1972 Precision Bass, Sunburst
13365 - Fender American Dlx Dimension IV Cayenne
4219 - Fender American Deluxe Jazz, Sunburst
9083 - Fender Am Special Jazz Bass, Sunburst
13650 - Fender Am. Vint. 64 Jazz, LP Blue
13694 - Fender FSR American Dlx Jazz Bass, Black
13307 - Fender Marcus Miller Jazz Bass, White
12202 - Fender Marcus Miller Jazz Bass, Nat Used
12288 - Fender Mike Dimt Road Worn Precision SB
8113 - Fender Modern Player Available To Order
13628 - Fender Road Worn 50s P Bass, Used
13253 - Fender Road Worn 50's P Bass, Sunburst
12426 - Fender Standard Jazz Bass Brown Sunburst
13252 - Fender Starcaster J Bass, Black
13323 - Fender Sting Precision Bass, Sunburst
12895 - G&L Tribute L2000 4 String Bass Guitar
12894 - G&L Tribute L2000 4 String Bass Guitar
10997 - G&L Tribute SB2 4-String, Metallic Black

Gibson

9593 - Gibson Firebird Studio Reverse 70s Bass
12722 - Gibson Les Paul Bass, Heritage Cherry Sfb.
10074 - Gretsch G6073 Electrotone Bass, Burgundy
11189 - Hofner HCT Shorty Bass, Black
12218 - Hofner HCT Violin Bass Guitar in Blue
13328 - Hofner Violin Bass Ignition Black
12188 - Hofner Violin Bass Ignition Sunburst

LEVIN

6780 - Levin LB400, Redburst

Lodestone

8073 - Lodestone Primal Artist
8079 - Lodestone Primal Instinct P Bass, Green
8080 - Lodestone Primal Instinct Pbass Sunburst
8081 - Lodestone Primal Pro in Chignal Blue
8082 - Lodestone Primal Pro 4, Tobacco Sunburst
4175 - Marleaux B Votan 4, Black

MUSIC MAN

4781 - MusicMan Stingray 3EQ, True Gold
8250 - Musicman Sterling 4 String Bass, Blue
8997 - Musicman Sterling SB14 Bass, Sunburst

Overwater

8435 - Overwater Aspiration Std 4, Black Cherry
10962 - Overwater Inspiration 4, Blue Burst
9867 - Overwater Inspiration Jazz PJ 4 String
13538 - Pro Martin Bass Guitar, Secondhand
13619 - SX VPB62 4 String Bass, Black, Used
12405 - Spector Bass Performer 4 String, Black
11197 - Spector Bass Performer 4, Red
13337 - Spector Coda Pro 4 Black Cherry Stain
4417 - Steinberger Spirit XT2 4 String Bass
13322 - Tanglewood Rebel Bass, Lefty, Used, Blk

WestCoast

6446 - Westcoast BG4 Neck Thru Body, Brown
8437 - Westcoast JP1 4 String Bass in Trans Red

YAMAHA

10120 - Yamaha BB1024X 4 String, Caramel Brown
4649 - Yamaha BB2024X, Vintage White
6953 - Yamaha BB424, Vintage White
5634 - Yamaha BB714BS Billy Sheehan, Lava Red
10314 - Yamaha RBX170EW Bass
4331 - Yamaha TRB1004J, Trans Black
13137 - Yamaha TRBX304 Bass In Mist Green

5 String Basses

13264 - Bass Collection Portrait Fretless 5
10109 - Cort A5 5 String Bass, Open Pore Natural
13657 - Cort A5 Custom SP 5, Spalted Maple
12538 - Cort GB75 5 String Bass, Open Pore Nat.
11014 - Fender Jazz Bass 5 String
13117 - Fender Deluxe Dimension Bass V Natural
11066 - G&L Tribute L2500 5 String Natural Gloss
9702 - G&L Tribute L2500 5-String In Walnut
5323 - Lakland 5501 5 String Bass, Sunburst
8174 - Lodestone Primal Pro 5, Chignal Blue
12198 - MusicMan Stingray 5 Honeyburst
13306 - MusicMan Stingray 5, Black
9002 - Overwater Aspiration Deluxe Bass, Black
9009 - Overwater Contemporary 5-String Bass
10963 - Overwater Inspiration 5, Red Burst
12561 - Peavey Millenium BXP 5-String Bass
10960 - Pedulla Rapture Fretted 5-String Bass
5121 - Rockbass Streamer LX5, Black
11196 - Spector Bass Legend 5 Classic Blk Cherry
11195 - Spector Bass Performer 5 Black SP5BK
12406 - Spector Legend Custom 5 String, Amber
13214 - Spector Legend Custom 5 String, Black
6448 - Westcoast JB5, Trans Amber
9351 - Yamaha BB425 5 String Bass Guitar, Black
8275 - Yamaha BB425X,Sunburst, Used
8999 - Yamaha RBX5A2 5 String Bass, Black
8023 - Yamaha TRB1005J 5 String, Caramel Brown
10308 - Yamaha TRBX305 Bass
13389 - Yamaha TRBX305 Bass, Candy Apple Red
10310 - Yamaha TRBX505 Bass

Acoustic Basses

8687 - Breedlove Passport Plus B350/CB4
5393 - Levin LAB150 Bass, Electro 4, Black
5394 - Levin LAB150 Bass, Electro 4, Natural
5392 - Levin LAB150 Bass, Electro 4, Sunburst
6782 - Levin LB100 Bass, Electro 4, Sunburst
13678 - Tanglewood DBT AB Acoustic Bass
13472 - Tanglewood TW155A Acoustic Bass
13014 - Tanglewood TWRBE Travel Bass Guitar
12292 - Westfield PJB380 Acoustic Bass Natural

Electric Upright Basses

4910 - Bridge Cetus Electric Double Bass
5110 - NS Design NXT Electric Double Bass
6360 - Yamaha SLB200 Silent Double Bass

Fretless Basses

13264 - Bass Collection Portrait Fretless 5
13371 - Squier Vintage Modified Fretless Bass

String Deals

2 Sets of Elite (4 String) £25 inc P&P
2 Sets of Elite (5 String) £30 inc P&P
2 Sets of Rotosound (4 String) £25 inc P&P
2 Sets of Rotosound (5 String) £30 inc P&P
2 Sets of D'Addario (4 String) £35 inc P&P
2 Sets of D'Addario (4 String) £40 inc P&P

Bass Combos

6762 - A arena BASS45 (45W, 1x12)
13577 - AER Amp III Bass Amp Combo
5627 - AER Amp One (200W, 1x10)

Ashdown

4942 - AER Amp Two (240W, 1x12)
4389 - Ashdown 220 Touring 112 (220W, 1x12)
4388 - Ashdown 220 Touring 115 (220W, 1x15)
4385 - Ashdown 330 Touring 115H (300W, 1x15)
11192 - Ashdown ABM C115H Neo Evo 3 Combo
6459 - Ashdown ABM C210T-500 EVO 3 (575W)
12259 - Ashdown ABM Mini 115 NEO Bass Cab
12258 - Ashdown ABM Mini 210 NEO 2x10
11193 - Ashdown ABM NEO C210 400W 2x10
8712 - Ashdown ABM414H 4 x 10 Bass Cabinet
8714 - Ashdown After Eight 20 Bass Combo
13135 - Ashdown DH15 C110 Drophead Bass
13134 - Ashdown DH30 C115 Drophead Valve
8757 - Ashdown Electric Blue 12 220
8758 - Ashdown Electric Blue EB15 220
5669 - Ashdown EB180 12 Evo2 (180W, 1x12)
5668 - Ashdown EB180 15 Evo2 (180W, 1x15)
8751 - Ashdown Five Fifteen ABM100 Bass
8753 - Ashdown Five Fifteen Mini Rig 100
8718 - Ashdown Mag C115 300 Evo III Bass
8720 - Ashdown Mag C210T 300 Bass Combo
8727 - Ashdown Mag C410T 600 Evo III
9320 - Ashdown MiBass C110-200
9321 - Ashdown MiBass C115 550 Bass Combo
13202 - Ashdown RM-C115-420 420w Bass
9311 - Ashdown TE12 C115h Bass Combo
9310 - Ashdown TE12 C210h 12 Band Bass
5224 - Ashdown Tourbus 10 (10W, 1x6.5)
5062 - Ashdown Tourbus 15 (15W, 1x8)
13122 - Ashdown Vintage Twelve 75 Bass Combo
8988 - EA Euphonic Audio iAmp 350 Bass Head
12430 - Eden EC10 50 Watts Bass Amp Combo
12432 - Eden EC15 180W Bass Amp Combo
12431 - Eden EC210 2 x 10 Bass Amp Combo
13375 - Eden EC28 Bass Amp Combo
12429 - Eden EC8 20 Watt Bass Combo
13566 - Eden EGRW1264 Head & Cab Package

Fender

13497 - Fender Rumble 100 Bass Amp Combo
4238 - Fender Rumble 15 (15W, 1x8)
12745 - Fender Rumble 200 Bass Combo
8284 - Fender Rumble 30 Bass Combo
4237 - Fender Rumble 350 (350W, 2x10)
4772 - Fender Rumble 75 Watt Bass Combo
10104 - Hartke A35 35W Bass Combo
9278 - Hartke A70 Solid State Bass Amp Combo
9471 - Hartke David Ellefson A70 Bass Combo
9008 - Hartke HMH112C Bass Combo
9281 - Hartke Hydrive HMH210C Bass Combo
9279 - Hartke Kickback 15 Bass Amp Combo

Markbass

9004 - Markbass 121 Lite Alain Caron Combo
6239 - Mark Bass CMD102P Bass Combo
6238 - Mark Bass CMD103H (400W, 3x10)
5472 - Mark Bass CMD151P J Berlin (300W)
13279 - MarkBass Markacoustic AC601 Combo
5473 - Mark Bass Micromark (50W, 1x6)
6240 - Mark Bass Mini CMD121P (300W, 1x12)
5474 - Mark Bass Mini CMD151P (300W,)
5471 - Mark Bass Minimark (250W, 2x6)
5475 - Mark Bass CMD121H (300W, 1x12)
9940 - Markbass Mini CMD 151 Jeff Berlin
9939 - Markbass MiniMark 802 Bass Combo
9938 - MicroMark 801 Bass Combo

ORANGE

5234 - Orange Crush PiX 25BX (25W, 1x8)
5233 - Orange Crush PiX 50BXT (50W, 1x12)
10265 - Orange Crush Pix CR100BXT
13516 - Orange Terror Bass 500 Bass Combo
10264 - Orange Terror Bass 500 Bass Combo

Peavey

8061 - Peavey MAX126 10 Watt BassCombo
11005 - Peavey Max 110 Bass Amp Combo
5965 - Peavey Max 112 (35W, 1x12)
5964 - Peavey Max 115 (50W, 1x15)
11004 - Peavey Max 158 Bass Amp Combo
13372 - RM-C210T-420 420w 2 x 10 Rootmaster
6320 - Roland CB100 (100W, 1x12)
4433 - Roland CB120XL Cube 120X (120w,1x12)
4435 - Roland Cube 20XL BASS (20W, 1x8)
4434 - Roland Cube 60XL (60W, 1x10)
5678 - Roland Microcube Bass RX, (5W, 4x4)

Bass Heads

13136 - Ashdown ABM400LITE Lightweight Head
13641 - Aguilar Tone Hammer 500 Bass Head
4387 - Ashdown 330, 330W
4398 - Ashdown 427 Small Block 427W
4384 - Ashdown 550, 550W
8706 - Ashdown ABM1000 Lite Evo III
8704 - Ashdown ABM2000 Lite Evo III
6760 - Ashdown ABM500 EVO III 575W
6250 - Ashdown ABM500RC Evo III 575W
6761 - Ashdown ABM900 EVO 3, 575+575W
4399 - Ashdown JJ500 JJ Burnel Sig 575W
5338 - Ashdown BTA400 400W
13131 - Ashdown CTM100 100W Valve Bass Head
11229 - Ashdown CTM15 15 Watt Bass Amp Head
8707 - Ashdown CTM300 Classic Tube Magnifier
13192 - Ashdown Five 15 BBH 220w Big Boy Head
5064 - Ashdown Little Bastard 30, 30W
8708 - Ashdown Little Bastard 550 Head
6455 - Ashdown MAG300H Evo III 300W
10938 - Ashdown MIBASS 2.0 640w Small Bass Head
8713 - Ashdown Mag600 Head Evo III Bass Head
8710 - Asdown MiBass 220
13203 - Ashdown RM Mag 420 Bass Amp Head
9309 - Ashdown TE12 500H 12 Band Bass Head
13200 - Eden E300 Bass Amplifier
13566 - Eden EGRW1264 Head & Cab Package
13414 - Eden WT800 Bass Amp Head
13198 - Eden WTX500 Bass Amp Head
9349 - Hartke HA2500 Bass Head
9027 - Hartke Kilo 1000 Bass Head
12382 - Hartke LH1000 Bass Head
10408 - MarkBass Bass MultiAmp Stereo
5675 - Mark Bass Little Mark 250 (250w)
5245 - Mark Bass Little Mark 800, 800W
6243 - Mark Bass Little Mark III Bass Head 500w
9035 - Markbass Little Mark III Tube Bass Head
5244 - MarkBass Little Mark Tube 800, 800W
5243 - Mark Bass SD1200, 1200W
7962 - Markbass TTE500 Randy Jackson Bass Head
9256 - Markbass Big Bang 500W Bass Head
9250 - Markbass Classic 300 Head
9941 - Markbass Little Mark 250 Head Black
9249 - Markbass L Mark Rocker 500 Bass Amp Head
9255 - Markbass Mornark Modular Bass Systems
9944 - Markbass MultiAmp
9725 - Markbass TTE800 Randy Jackson Bass Head
0000 - Orange - 4 Models in stock now
5957 - Peavey Pro VB3 300W
5960 - Peavey Tour 450, 450W

Bass Cabinets

13640 - Aguilar SL112 Bass Cabinet
8733 - Ashdown 210T Deep Lite Bass Cab
6457 - Ashdown ABM115 Compact (1x15)
6456 - Ashdown ABM410H (4x10)
4376 - Ashdown ABM610 (6x10)
5677 - Ashdown ABM810 (8x10)
4394 - Ashdown CL115 Large (1x15)
4393 - Ashdown CL410H (4x10)
4392 - Ashdown CL414H Plus Horn (4x10)
4391 - Ashdown CL610 Tilt-Cab (6x10)
4390 - Ashdown CL810 (8x10)
6146 - Ashdown NEO115H Compact (1x15)
6452 - Ashdown MAG115 Deep (1x15)
6451 - Ashdown MAG210T Deep (2x10)
8754 - Ashdown MAG414T Deep Lite
8730 - Ashdown Mag 115 Deep Lite Bass Cab
8755 - Ashdown Mag410T Deep 4 x 10 Bass Cab
8756 - Ashdown Mag810T 8 x 10" Bass Cab
9315 - Ashdown Mi10 Bass Cab
9316 - Ashdown Mi12 Bass Cab
4379 - Ashdown VS115 200 (1x15)
8691 - Ashdown VS212 200 2 x 12 Bass Cab
8711 - Ashdown VS412 600 Bass Extension Cab
13377 - Eden D112XST Bass Cab
13376 - Eden D410XST Bass Cab
13566 - Eden EGRW1264 Head & Cab Package
13197 - Eden EX112 Compact Bass Cab
13374 - Eden EX115 Bass Cab
13195 - Eden EX210 Bass Cab
13199 - Eden EX410 Bass Cabinet
13201 - Eden EX410SC Bass Cabinet
9007 - Hartke HCH112 Bass Cab
9292 - Hartke HCH410 Hydrive 410 Bass Cab
4766 - Mark Bass NY804 New York 804 (8 x 4)
6241 - Mark Bass STD102HF (2x10)
6242 - Mark Bass STD104HF (4x10)
5476 - Mark Bass STD104HR (4x10)
5477 - Mark Bass STD151HR (1x15)
9033 - Markbass Traveler 121H Bass Ext Cab
9034 - Markbass Traveler 151 P Bass Guitar Cab
4733 - Mark Bass Traveller TRV102P (2x10)
5431 - Mark Bass NY121 New York 1x 12 Bass Cab
10412 - Markbass NY122 2 x 12 Bass Cab
10409 - Markbass NY151 1 x 15 Bass Cab
10410 - Markbass NY151 RJ 1 x 15" Randy Jackson
10411 - Markbass NY604 Bass Cab
6259 - Orange OBC115 (1x15)
10266 - Orange OBC210 Bass Guitar Speaker Cab
6260 - Orange OBC410H (4x10)
5241 - Orange OBC810 (8x10)
6766 - Peavey 410TVX (4x10)

For full guitar details, pricing and photos, enter the number next to each guitar model into our SKU search facility on the website.

ASHDOWN

AAA Vintage 12, MAG C112-220 Combos

KEV SANDERS ROAD-TESTS TWO NEW BUDGET COMBOS FROM ASHDOWN. WILL THEY EMERGE UNSCATHED?

Ashdown Music
www.ashdownmusic.com

Ashdown's new AAA (standing for 'Access All Areas') range consists of a 220-watt head and seven different combos, ranging from a tiny 10 watter up to 220 watts. The Vintage 12 sits third in the range and is clearly designed to be big enough to cope with rehearsals and small gigs, while still compact enough to be a practice amp. As for the second combo on test, while the Rootmaster range is brand new, the MAG series from which it's developed has been around for years, always offering great quality, features and value. Will the new C112-220 combo continue that tradition?

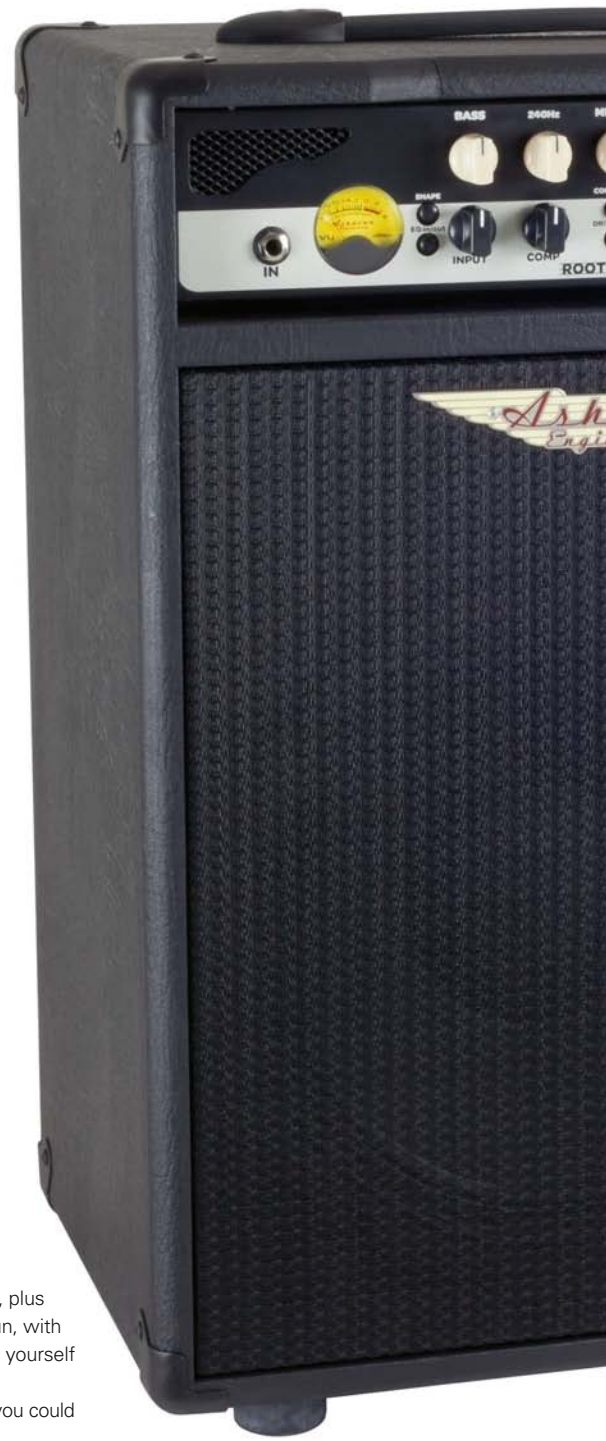
BUILD QUALITY AND FEATURES

Henry Ford would have liked these amps, as there's not much here that isn't black. The Ashdown corporate vinyl covering, the tough woven nylon grilles, the strap handles and plastic corner protectors, even the amp panel on the Vintage 12, are all black – although the control knobs and badges are a rather tasteful ivory colour, and the MAG C112 has that familiar retro-looking VU meter next to the input. Close inspection of the construction and components reveal that they're as well put together as any of the Ashdown range, the vast majority of which is now, like these two, manufactured at Ashdown's facility in China.

The Vintage combo boasts a healthy 75 watts, and although the preamp is comprehensive (three band EQ, hi and low inputs, drive control and a headphone output) there isn't much on the front panel to differentiate it from many other smallish bass combos currently available. That said, you do get an XLR DI, which is very welcome for recording, and an auxiliary input with mix control, meaning you can plug in your MP3 player or phone for hours of playalong fun. So far, so unexceptional – but this amp, like many of the new AAA practice amp range, has a real show-stopper of a feature: the AppTek input, which allows you to use your iPad or iPhone as an external preamp, once you've downloaded the appropriate app.

The AppTek function is an input on the front panel of the Vintage 12 into which you plug one end of the special cable provided, the other end going into your tablet or your phone. It's basically a mini effects loop on a stereo mini jack. The idea is that you download one of the Ampkit apps from Ashdown's software partner Agile. The basic app is free but at the moment you have to pay £3.99 for the virtual Ashdown ABM 900, although this will be free from the next update. Alternatively, you can buy the Ampkit+ app, which gives you a wide selection of amps, cabs and effects to use. Once you've done this, you have all the ABM 900 control panel has to offer, with features such as sub-harmonics, tube drive, compression and of course the comprehensive seven-band EQ. You can also choose from the selection of cabs and mics available and add dozens of guitar and bass effects by way of virtual foot pedals, all of which can be edited and added to your sound. It's great fun and seems to work brilliantly well.

The MAG 220 amp head in the C112 combo is a much more comprehensive unit, with five-band EQ plus compression and drive functions. It also has a sub control, which lets you add frequencies an octave below the note played: useful for enhancing the low end. All of these effects plus the EQ can be switched in or out via buttons on the front panel. Round the back, the combo continues to flaunt its pro credentials with a Speakon extension speaker output, FX loop, jack DI out and line in, although perhaps surprisingly, no XLR DI for recording or gigging. Like the smaller Vintage 12 amp, the MAG has a single 12" custom-built Ashdown driver, but here it's augmented with a piezo horn unit.



SOUNDS

Once we're in the studio with the bass plugged in, it soon becomes clear that as a practice amp, the Vintage 12 fulfils its brief brilliantly. The well-chosen EQ frequencies and warm, valve-like tone mean that finding a great bass sound to work with is quick and easy. For practice or rehearsals, there's more than enough volume and low end here to upset the neighbours. The Ampkit+ app through the AppTek facility, plus the 'aux in' feature makes using the amp for practice great fun, with loads of options for playing along to backing tracks, recording yourself and adding effects.

As a small gigging amp, the Vintage 12 handles more than you could

reasonably expect, but you do have to be realistic. While the 12" driver is extremely high quality for a combo at this price point, the amp is only 75 watts, and it's this that will determine just how far it can be pushed before clipping. At these higher levels there's also a slight lack of very high end sparkle, which is not surprising given the fact that there's no horn or compression driver to handle the highest frequencies. However, in real-world situations, the amp delivers above expectations and if you consistently need more volume and a wider frequency range, you'd be better off going for the more powerful MAG C112 anyway.

For such a small combo, the MAG C112 really delivers. The much bigger amp plus the addition of an HF unit means that not only is it way louder than the Vintage 12, but it also has much more headroom and a sweeter, brighter top end at higher volumes. Of course, it's still small enough to function as a practice amp, but here's an amp which is just as happy in the studio or small venue, and the extension socket on the back panel means it's a simple job to add an extra cab, pulling the full 220 watts from the amp and further increasing its potential for gigging. The comprehensive five-band EQ, effects and routing facilities mean that there's much more choice with the C112, and even my old '62 Jazz with its exhausted original pickups can be moulded into something like a tight modern sound, with bags of low end kick and top end sparkle.

CONCLUSION

Even five years ago you rarely found an 'aux in' socket on a practice combo. Ashdown have not only included one on the Vintage 12 and on most of their other practice amps, but they've also had the foresight to design in the AppTek feature, suddenly bringing the humble bass practice combo kicking and screaming into the 21st century. I'm surprised this kind of thing hasn't become mainstream earlier, although there have of course been plenty of modelling amps available for some time. This system is limited only by the external software and available apps.

All this software and app stuff wouldn't count for much if you didn't have a good bass amp to work with, and the new AAA Vintage 12 isn't just a vehicle for this new technology, it's also a great little bass amp in its own right. You could quite easily buy this amp, plug in and enjoy it without ever using the AppTek feature, but to do so would miss out on the thing that elevates it above some of the competition.

The fact that the MAG C112 doesn't have the AppTek feature underlines the kind of situation in which Ashdown envisage this amp will be used. Yes, of course it will still work brilliantly as 'just' a practice amp, but it's more than up to the job of rehearsals and recording – and as part of a modular system with an extension cab hooked up, there won't be many small and medium gigs it wouldn't be able to handle. Its diminutive size and flexibility will make this amp popular with a whole range of players, whatever their needs, and the incredibly low price of both this and the Vintage 12 should mean that both are a big success for Ashdown.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

AAA VINTAGE 12 / MAG C112-220
PRICE | £269 / £399
INPUTS | 2 [hi/lo] / 1 [3.9m/10K Ohms]
POWER | (RMS) 75 watts / 220 watts
SPEAKERS | 1x12" custom / 1x12" custom plus piezo HF horn
EQ, AAA Vintage 12: Bass +/- 15db @ 100hz. Lo Mid +/- 15db @ 340hz. Mid +/- 15db @ 660hz Hi Mid +/- 15db @ 1.6Khz. Treble +/- 15db @ 7khz shelving EQ, MAG C112-220 Bass +/-15dB @ 100Hz Lo Mid +/-15dB @ 220Hz Middle +/-15dB @ 660Hz Hi Mid +/-15dB @ 1.6kHz Treble +/-15dB @ 7kHz shelving Deep +
DIMENSIONS | (mm) (WxDxH): 410 x 330 x 480 / 540 x 390 x 335
WEIGHT | 20 kg / 22kg

WHAT WE THINK

PLUS | Two good quality and well priced new combos from Ashdown. The Vintage 12 is elevated to something really special once you add in the Apptek functionality. The MAG C112 is a flexible all rounder with a great preamp
MINUS | No XLR out on the MAG C112. No Android platform apps yet for the AppTek function. Both a little uninspiring to look at
OVERALL | Ashdown's keen quality control means the Vintage 12 is a real bargain. The MAG C112 is also great value and although no bigger than the Vintage 12, would make a great one-stop amp for nearly any situation – gigs, rehearsals, studio or practice

BGM RATING

BUILD QUALITY
BUILD QUALITY
SOUND QUALITY
SOUND QUALITY
VALUE
VALUE

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- Bass Guitar Magazine, January 2015

BGM RATING

BUILD QUALITY
SOUND QUALITY
VALUE

Bass Guitar Magazine
THE UK'S NUMBER ONE BASS GUITAR MAGAZINE

WHAT WE THINK

PLUS | Huge low-end punch, lightweight and a great price. Two of these cabs will make a portable rig that will handle most gigs

MINUS | Nothing

OVERALL | British-made and designed and quite possibly the best compact and lightweight bass cabs available today. If used with a decent amp, a single cab should be more than adequate for most small gigs or rehearsals

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SUPER COMPACT

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WA 1000 HEAD, W CA 408 LW CE 4X8 AND W CA 112 LW CE 1X12 CABS PRICES **£734, £550.50, £550.50**

WARWICK LWA 1000

LOUD, LIGHTWEIGHT AND LIFTABLE, WARWICK'S NEW LWA 1000 HEAD AND CABS LAND ON CHRIS HANBY'S DOORSTEP FOR A ROAD TEST...

Warwick
www.warwick.de

Behold Warwick's first attempt at entering the lightweight bass amplifier market. It'll be interesting to see if the German luthiers have kept true to their design ethos and are able to offer a significant USP to make us part with our cash. Given my previous experiences with the brand, my expectations are high, and I was very keen to try out the LWA 1000 paired with its companion W CA 408 LW CE 4x8 and 1 x W CA 112 LW CE 1x12 cabs.

BUILD QUALITY AND FEATURES

On unpacking the LWA 1000, I was expecting to see a stark modern design. Instead I was confronted with something that looked like a high-end studio piece from a bygone era, thanks in part to the retro wooden panelling on the sides (made from bubinga, of course). It's available with either a black or silver housing. Having switched it on, you are greeted with an ultraviolet glow from the backlit Warwick logo, again adding to the nostalgic look of it all.

The controls are neatly laid out and the aesthetic is straightforward and user-friendly. Channel 1 runs from left to right: ¼" jack input, input gain, mute on/off, bass, lo mid, hi mid, treble, compressor level and compressor on/off. Sensibly, Warwick has decided to mirror these controls for Channel 2. While this might sound obvious, I've seen many dual channel amps where this is not the case, so I commend Warwick for doing this. A single knob centred between the two channels controls the output volume of both channels. This layout makes sense and allows for very easy tweaking.

I liked the aux in and headphone sockets, which make the LWA 1000 a handy tool for practice too. The rear panel provides tuner, ¼" line out and effects send and return jacks. Also present is the now-obligatory XLR balanced output, with pre/post switch and ground lift options. I was surprised to see only one Speakon connector, though: a pair would have been useful.

It all seems very nicely put together, as you would expect from a high-end German product, and the unit has a robust feel while being deceptively lightweight. To protect the head, you can purchase optional rack ears or a purpose-made gig bag at an additional cost. The LWA 1000 is also supplied with a footswitch to change channel. It cleverly uses a TRS cable to connect to either of the inputs, and you can then plug in your standard ¼" jack cable into the footswitch. This means you can use one bass with two different EQ and compression settings, or two instruments each with their own dedicated channel. One thing that struck me was the lack of a status

LED to indicate which channel you are currently using.

Warwick specifically designed the W CA 408 LW CE 4x8 and W CA 112 LW CE 1x12 cabs for use with the LWA 1000, rated at 600 and 500 watts respectively. They both have the same dimensions and stack neatly. The 4x8 also sports an adjustable tweeter. If you're used to standard-sized 4x10 or 1x15 cabs, these Warwick cabs will seem a lot smaller: this makes for much easier transportation and setup. Couple this with their fairly lightweight, and they start to make perfect sense as a replacement for their larger cousins. They both look the part, all in black with fluffy covering. This is much more hardwearing than traditional tolex, if perhaps not as nice to look at. They both have a sturdy metal grille to protect the Celestion speakers. Both cabs also have robust metal handles, which were comfortable and well placed to balance the cabinet when lifting.

SOUND QUALITY

First up, I plugged in an active five-string Jazz bass and set the controls flat with the compressor off. The tone was full and focused with a bright, modern top end. This rig has headroom in spades. With 1000 watts to play with, it's like driving a car with a large engine; the LWA cruises along effortlessly, pumping out thick, defined low end. Pulling the mids down a bit emphasized the amp's tightness and complemented the slightly scooped nature of the bass. The bass control allows you to go from thin and reedy to overwhelming subbiness, and the frequency sweep is very usable, making it simple to reduce woofiness in the room. The treble control adds a glassy, hi-fi top end, utilising the 4x8 cab's tweeter. The inbuilt compressor is neat too, adding a warm, musical bit of squish, great to even up fingerstyle lines and a must when slapping.

Next up I tried a stock P-Bass, again starting with a flat EQ. The tone was clear and clean, and with a few twiddles of the knobs I could go from a rounded Motown Portaflex sound, pushing the low end and cutting the top, through to clanky punk edge by boosting the mids and using a pick. Last up was my faithful old Thumb bass, which for me is where the amp really shines. There is something about its distinctive Warwick growl that works in perfect harmony with the LWA 1000. You would expect this combination to sound pretty good, of course, as I would bet that much of the R&D was performed with Warwick basses. In every setting I tried I was rewarded with a clear, refined low end with soaring highs and lovely mid-range snarl.

CONCLUSION

This is a well designed and easy-to-use amp. The 1000-watt power rating means it can cope with practically any gig situation you put it in, from tiny club date to festival stage. Regardless of instrument, this rig allows any bass you plug into it to speak. What the LWA 1000 excels at it providing controlled, rich, clean tone. The bandwidths for the EQ section are well chosen and allow for quick and musical tone shaping. Its effortless tone, greater wattage and dual preamps may help it to perform in a well-saturated market. Only time will tell, but it certainly performed well during my test.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

WARWICK LWA 1000 HEAD
SUGGESTED RRP | £734
POWER | 1000 watts at less than 1 per cent THD
FEATURES | Class D power amp section, noise-free Class A preamp circuitry, two channels, footswitch; separate input gain, mute, 4-band EQ and adjustable compressor for each channel; stereo aux input for MP3 player/CD player, headphone out with integrated stereo headphone amplifier, serial FX loop, tuner output, line output, balanced DI output with pre/post and ground lift switches; dual purpose Neutrik / ¼" jack lockable speaker connector
DIMENSIONS | (W/H/D): 270 x 98 x 146mm
Weight: 2.75 kg

W CA 408 LW CE BASS CABINET
SUGGESTED | RRP £550.50
POWER HANDLING | 600 watts, 8 ohm
FEATURES | 4 x 8" Celestion Speaker (8 ohm), 1" Celestion neodymium compression driver, High Frequency Attenuation Control, two dual purpose ¼" jack and coaxial lockable connectors
FREQUENCY RANGE | 65Hz-20kHz
DIMENSIONS | (W/H/D) 520 x 540 x 400mm
Weight | 21.9 kg

W CA 112 LW CE BASS REFLEX SPEAKER CABINET
SUGGESTED RRP | £550.50
POWER HANDLING | 500 watts, 8 ohms
FEATURES | 1 x 12" Celestion speaker, 1" Celestion neodymium compression HF driver, two dual purpose 1/4" jack and coaxial, lockable connectors
FREQUENCY | range: 65 Hz-20 kHz
DIMENSIONS | (W/H/D): 520x540x400mm
WEIGHT | 17.6 kg

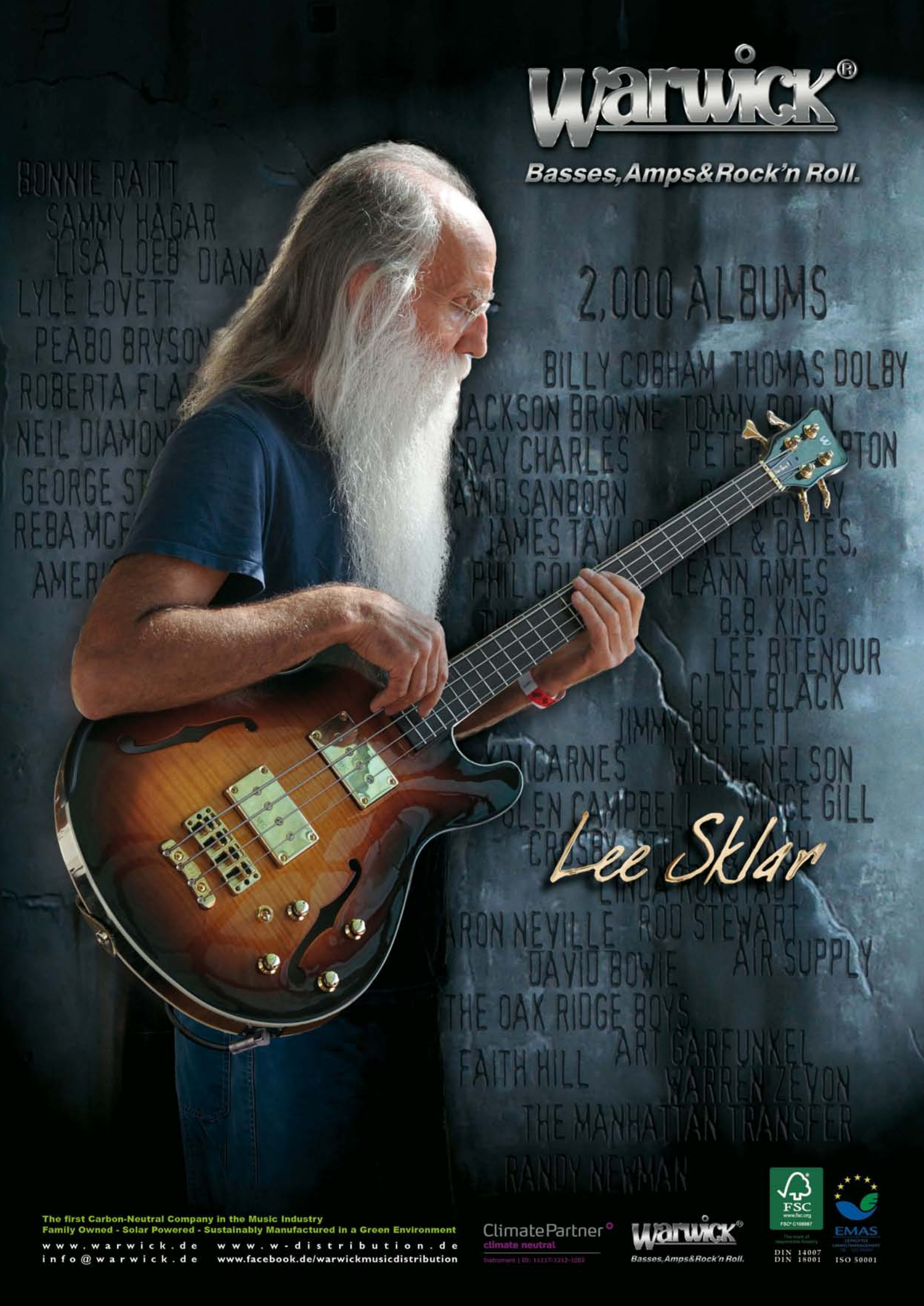
WHAT WE THINK

PLUS | Small, light, clean and powerful with great breadth of tone possibilities
MINUS | The lack of channel status LED on the front panel or footswitch could make you come a cropper live. Dual Speakon outs would be a good failsafe option
OVERALL | If you're looking to replace your 4x10 or 1x15 rig with something more easily transportable and you need plenty of heft, this could be the ideal solution

BGM RATING

BUILD QUALITY
SOUND QUALITY
VALUE

The 4x8 and 1x12 cabs surprised me in that they easily coped with the high output of the head, and didn't even come close to folding until the bass knob was maxed. They could easily replace the industry standard 4x10 and 1x15 cabs with no loss of punch or low end. Offering smaller, lighter enclosures is an obvious advantage in that it makes for easier transportation – and therefore you incur fewer trips to the osteopath.



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BILL NASH PB-57

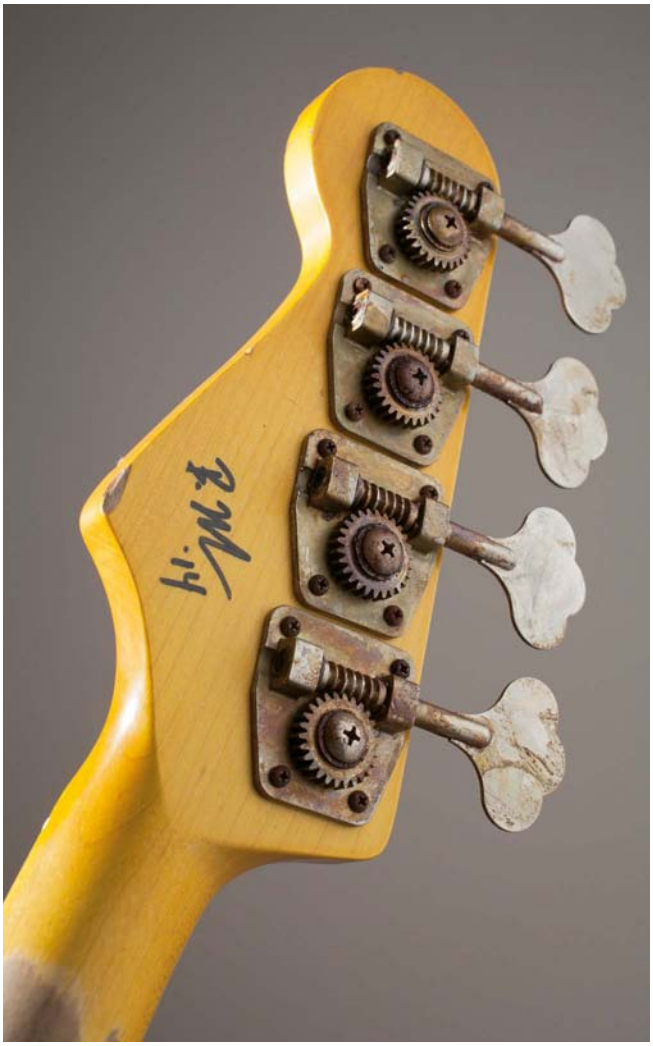
DAVE THORPE TACKLES BILL NASH'S LATEST AGED P-BASS

Bill Nash Guitars
www.nashguitars.com

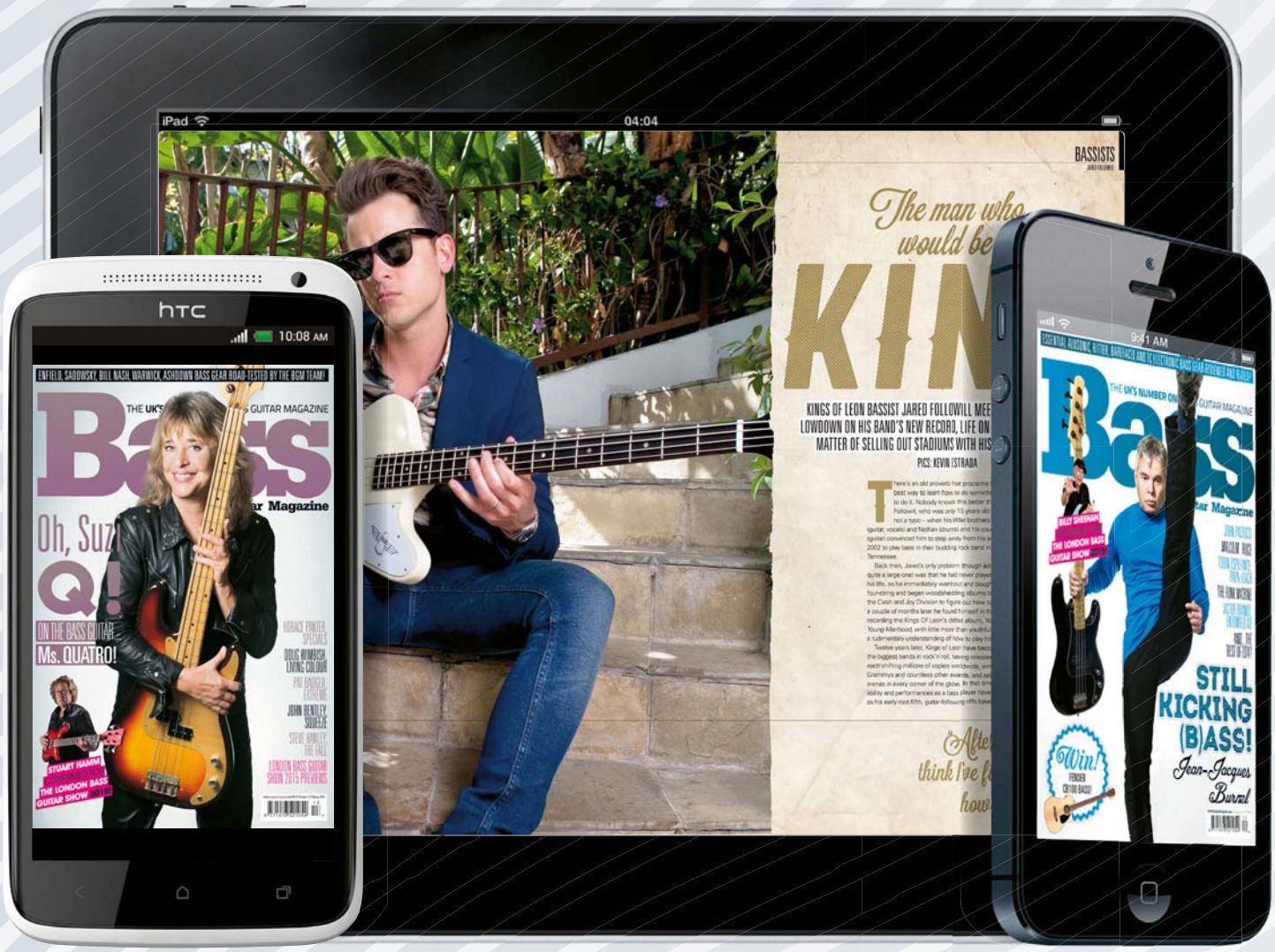
Products from the renowned American luthier Bill Nash are rarely seen in the UK, although well-known bassists such as Glenn Hughes swear by them, so it's great to get our hands on one for review. Nash, who produces about 90 guitars and basses per month, excels at classic body shapes with aged finishes, using traditional construction methods with a modern twist. On first sight, this PB-57 seems to offer a lot of bass for its midmarket price point: let's give it a spin.

BUILD QUALITY

Close inspection of the PB-57 is rewarded with quality in all the right places. A perfectly weighted ash body meets a contoured maple neck, with a near-perfect fretting and action. The timber choices are typically traditional, but it's clear that stringent quality and selection control procedures are in place to ensure the best examples are employed on this example. The body looks like a two-piece construction, but is so well matched that it could easily be mistaken for a single piece. The neck pocket and fit is seamless, with the trusty four-screw scenario in place: the aged maple neck is fitted with well-finished and rounded 6105 fretwire. Gotoh is the hardware of choice and is also aged.



Bass
Guitar Magazine



DIGITAL EDITIONS

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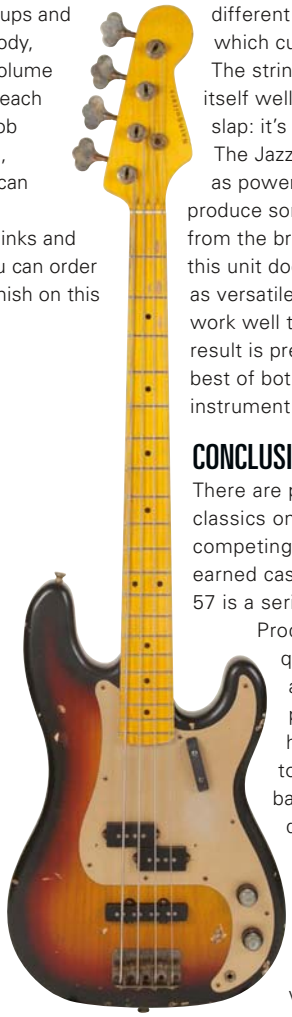
A one-piece gold anodised scratchplate holds the pickups and control knobs together atop the nitrocellulose-finished body, with a beautiful, understated three-tone sunburst. The volume controls allow separate volume and tone adjustment on each of the concentric pots, reminiscent of Fender's stack-knob '62 Jazz. Lollar provide the pickups for our review model, although Nash also fit Dimarzio as well as Seymour Duncan sets, and the height and adjustment of the pickups feels well executed. As for Nash's handmade finish, bumps, dinks and scratches are evident throughout the neck and body: you can order various stages of ageing, from a light relic such as the finish on this bass, through to much heavier treatments.

"THERE ARE PLENTY OF REPRO CLASSICS ON THE MARKET COMPETING FOR YOUR HARD-EARNED CASH, AND THE PB-57 IS A SERIOUS CONTENDER"

SOUNDS AND PLAYABILITY

Even before plugging in the Nash, its acoustic feel and resonance is quite something. The PB-57 is instantly comfortable: it feels like a bass that you've been playing for years. The C-shaped neck profile is easy to get around, with a chunky but fast feel. On plugging in, the Lollar P pickup offers the expected well-rounded, full sound with a deep and resonant tone. Add in the tone control, which is the outer of the two knobs on the concentric pot, and you gain different levels of attack, which cut through nicely. The string spacing lends itself well to pick, fingers or slap: it's a real all-rounder. The Jazz pickup isn't quite as powerful but it does produce some honking tones from the bridge. On its own, this unit doesn't seem quite as versatile, but both pickups work well together. The end result is pretty close to the best of both worlds in one instrument.



CONCLUSION

There are plenty of repro classics on the market competing for your hard-earned cash, and the PB-57 is a serious contender. Produced with serious quality in mind at an attractive ticket price, a lot of time has been taken to ensure that this bass arrives at the dealer ready to go, with a fantastic setup, every note ringing out and delivering warm and clear sounds with a familiar feel for players. If this is how every Bill Nash bass plays off the peg, there are very good things ahead for the company.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

PRICE | £1,300 approx
MADE IN | USA
BODY | Ash
NECK |Maple, bolt-on
FINGERBOARD | Maple
SCALE LENGTH | 34"
CONTROLS | Two volume, two tone on 250k concentric pots
HARDWARE | Gotoh
PICKUPS | Lollar
WEIGHT | 4.2kg
CASE/GIG BAG INCLUDED? | Case
LEFT HAND VERSION AVAILABLE? | Yes

WHAT WE THINK

PLUS | A super-playable, well-constructed instrument that delivers great tone and sounds. You will want to keep picking this bass up again and again
MINUS | The Jazz pickup could do with a little more output, and the aged finish may not appeal to everyone
OVERALL | The PB-57 proves that traditional basses don't have to have a brand name beginning with F or G on the headstock. Nash's take on the old school bass is excellent at this price point

BGM RATING

BUILD QUALITY
SOUND QUALITY
VALUE

BASS TECHNIQUES

MAKING YOU A BETTER BASS PLAYER

Welcome to our redesigned techniques section, in which *Bass Guitar Magazine* collates the wit and wisdom of the *crème de la crème* of the electric and upright bass world. We're fortunate enough to have some serious talent on the team, from world-class music educators to experienced touring musicians, who between them have laid down the low notes in every studio, club and arena in the civilised world. Note that we've divided the columns according to **Beginner**, **Intermediate** and **Advanced** level for easy reference. Whether you're looking to improve your playing technique, expand your awareness of theory, set up your rig to sound like your particular bass hero or simply get on a bus and tour, we provide the answers you need here. What are you waiting for? Dive in...

Joel McIver, editor

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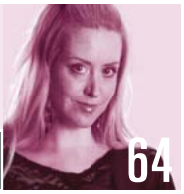


Ellen O'Reilly is a freelance bassist and vocalist currently studying at ICMP. Ellen has extensive experience in gigging, studio and television work.
www.lowendlady.com

ELLEN O'REILLY BEGINNER'S THEORY **64**

Paul Geary attended the Berklee College of Music in Boston and the Musicians' Institute of Technology. He also heads up the Academy Of Contemporary Music's bass school.
www.paulgeary.com

PAUL GEARY BEGINNER'S TECHNIQUES **65**

Rob Statham has amassed over 25 years as a professional freelance bass player. He has played in a wide range of musical settings, including jazz, blues, prog and classical, and he has taught for the past three years at Tech Music School.

ROB STATHAM INTERMEDIATE TECHNIQUES **66**

Alex Webster founded the frankly terrifying Cannibal Corpse in 1988 and has guested since then on musically complex projects such as Blotted Science. He is the author of the *Extreme Metal Bass* instruction book.

ALEX WEBSTER INTERMEDIATE THEORY **68**

Head of the Bass Department at BIMM Brighton, Franc has worked with artists such as Steve Howe (Yes), Lisa Moorish, and Mike Lindup (Level 42). Franc uses Jeff Chapman basses and Elites strings.
www.francoshea.com

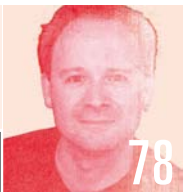
FRANC O'SHEA ADVANCED THEORY **70**

Say hello to advanced techniques columnist Philip Mann, star of studio and stage. Ready to get those fingers flying? Mann up...

PHILIP MANN ADVANCED TECHNIQUES **74**

David Etheridge studied double bass at the Royal College of Music. Since then he's worked with musicians such as Nigel Kennedy and Martin Taylor. David teaches double and electric bass and is the MD of two big bands and a 55-piece jazz orchestra.

DAVID ETHERIDGE UPRIGHT BASS **76**



Mike has written for *BGM* since 2004 and has been a bassist since 1987, clocking up over 3000 gigs around the world in the process. He has played for and worked with the likes of Bonnie Tyler and Toyah Willcox, and has a bass collection to rival a small shop.

MIKE BROOKS COVER BAND PRO **78**

Steve Lawson is the UK's most celebrated solo bass guitarist, with 15 years of touring and 36 solo and collaborative albums to his name. He also lectures at colleges around the world.
www.stevelawson.net.

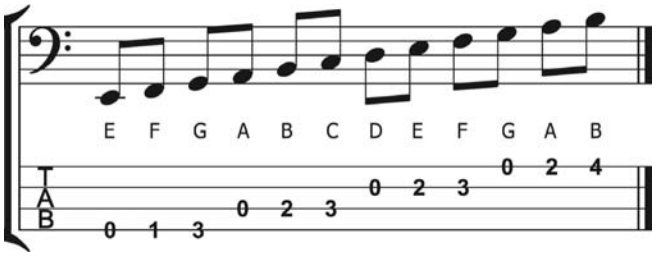
STEVE LAWSON EFFECTS MAESTRO **80**

BGM Notation Legend

THE FOLLOWING IS A GUIDE TO THE NOTATION SYMBOLS AND TERMINOLOGY USED IN *BASS GUITAR MAGAZINE*

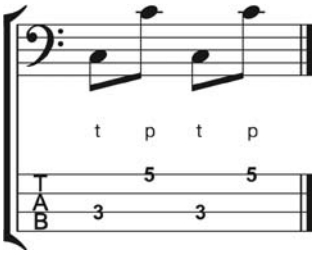
The Stave: most music written for the bass guitar uses the bass clef. The example to the right shows the placement of the notes on the stave.

Tablature: this is a graphical representation of the music. Each horizontal line corresponds with a string on the bass guitar, with the lowest line representing the lowest pitched string (E). The numbers represent the frets to be played. Numbers stacked vertically indicate notes that are played together. Where basses with five or six strings are required, the tablature stave will have five or six lines as necessary.

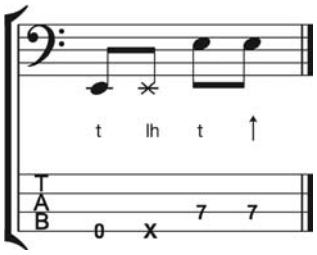


Notes shown in brackets indicate that a note has been tied over from a previous bar.

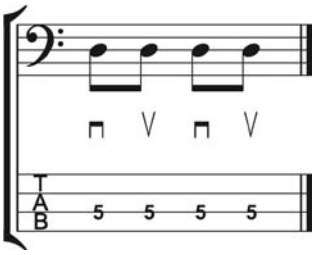
PLAYING TECHNIQUES



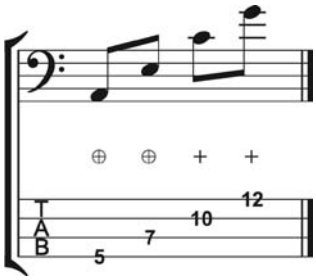
SLAP AND POP TECHNIQUE
Notes slapped with the thumb are marked with a 't', notes popped with the fingers marked with a 'p'



ADVANCED SLAP TECHNIQUE
Fretting hand slaps are marked 'lh' and double thumbing upstrokes are shown with an upward pointing arrow

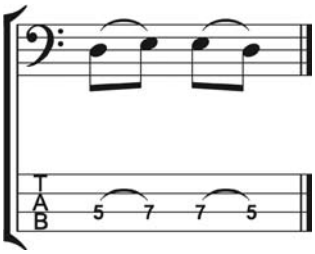


PLECTRUM TECHNIQUE
Where necessary, down and upstrokes with the pick will be shown using these symbols (down-up-down-up)

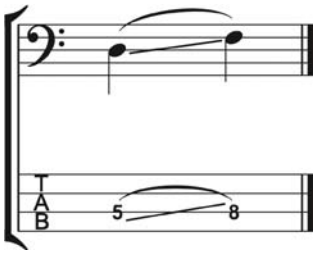


TAPPING TECHNIQUES
Fretting hand taps are shown with a '+' in a circle. Picking hand taps are shown with '+'. Specific fingers will be shown with numbers if necessary

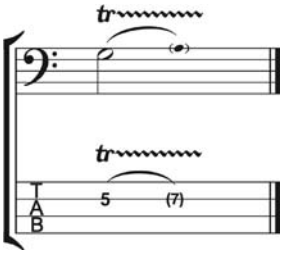
FRETTING TECHNIQUES



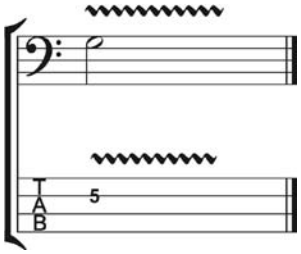
HAMMER-ON AND PULL-OFF
Hammer-ons and pull-offs are shown with a slur over the notes. Only the first note is plucked by the picking hand



SLIDE (GLISSANDO)
Slides are performed by playing the first note then sliding the fretting finger up to the second note

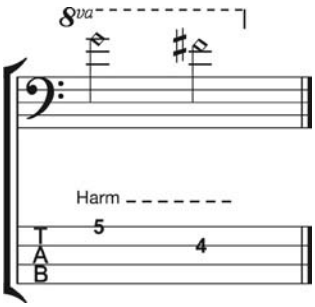


TRILLS
Trills are performed by rapidly alternating between the two notes shown using hammer-ons and pull-offs

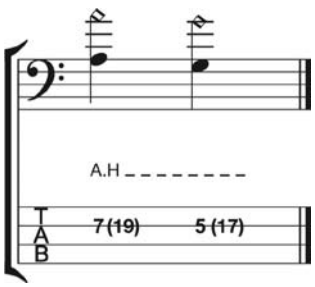


VIBRATO
The pitch of the note is altered by repeatedly bending the string up and back with the fretting finger

PLAYING HARMONICS

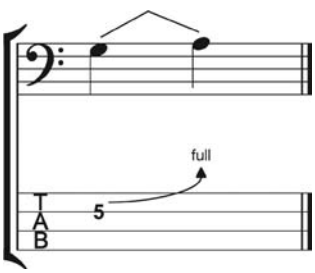


NATURAL HARMONICS
The note is played as a harmonic by lightly touching the string above the fret indicated

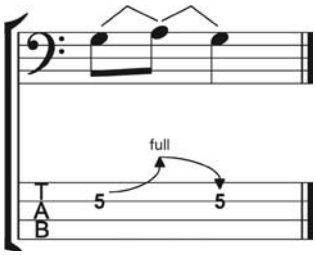


ARTIFICIAL HARMONICS
Pluck the string while fretting the lower note and placing the edge of the picking hand thumb an octave higher (the note shown in brackets)

BENDING NOTES



BEND
The note is bent upwards to the interval specified: ½ = semitone, full = tone



BEND AND RELEASE
The note is bent up to the interval indicated then released back to its original pitch

THE FRONT LINE

WANT TO MAKE IT AS A PROFESSIONAL BASSIST? LISTEN UP AS BGM'S WORLD CLASS BASS TEAM REPORTS BACK FROM THE TOUR BUS

THE JAZZ BASSIST

RUTH GOLLER

Jazz guru Ruth gets out and about

Back in November, we had the annual London Jazz Festival, where the absolute highlight for me was Bill Frisell's presentation of his new album, *Guitar In The Space Age*. I've mentioned before that Bill is one of my absolute musical heroes, so you can imagine my excitement. This time it wasn't only Bill that inspired me immensely, but his whole band. As much as I am into individual playing, I absolutely love to hear a strong-sounding ensemble. This year he played alongside fellow guitarist and pedal steel guitarist Greg Leisz and his old rhythm section, Tony Sherr on electric bass and Kenny Wolleson on drums. You can really tell they have played together a lot and that they love each other's playing. I would bet they are good friends, too. When I listen to a really strong band like this one, I stop hearing the individual sounds that everybody makes: the music seems like a river that flows in harmony. Everybody tries to fit in, rather than shine individually. I was especially impressed by Tony Sherr's playing. I have always loved his bass playing, but this was the first time I had seen him live, and it just confirmed to me how amazing he is. He was listening with such intensity to what was going on around him, and fitting in so smoothly with the unique sound of the band. In fact all four musicians were playing like great bass players, with the aim of creating the best music possible. For musicians, winter events such as this one are not actually much different to those held during the rest of the year, although they might not be as well attended because we have less publicity. I always try to remind the audience that this kind of musical action is happening all year round, and that they don't have to wait until November to see good jazz.

soundcloud.com/ruth-goller

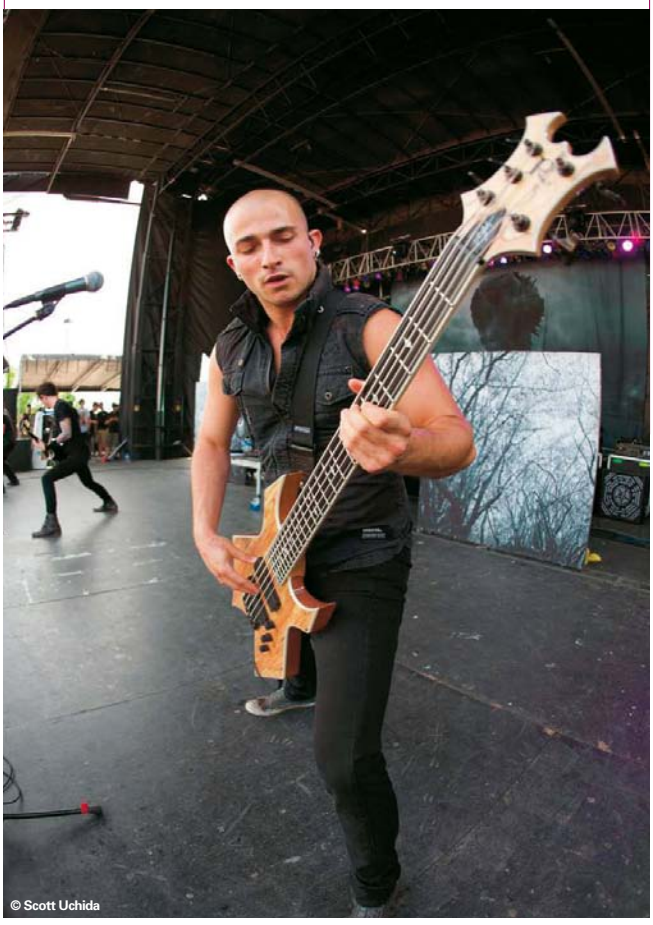
THE METALHEAD

PAOLO GREGOLETTO

Trivium bassist Paolo Gregoletto hails an influence

So another cycle has come to a close, and I'm making my way home from a 'vacation'-like tour in Australia. A few more coffees and another five-hour flight across the US and I will be in full vacation mode. My breaks consist mainly of eating, going to the gym, bike rides and, of course, playing music. Our seventh record is next on the agenda, but it's still a few weeks before we even begin talking about the schedule, so let's talk about our recent trip to Japan. Ever since Trivium's first visit there back in 2005, I've noticed a keen interest in virtuosity and showmanship in the music fans there. Hell, even the pop music has shred guitar solos intermingled with the slickest J-Pop melodies you've ever heard. If Babymetal shocked you, then you're not ready for the insanity of the Idol genre over there. Nothing really makes a whole lot of sense and it's all pretty wacky, which is why I enjoy being immersed in it all. I watched Mr. Big play one of the smaller shows of their tour in Osaka, in front of a mere 3,000 people, but the night before that they played a sold-out Budokan, the legendary arena. This is what heaven surely has to look like for a musician. When it comes to Billy Sheehan, every bass player has to know about him: if not, you need to turn in your bass player badge this moment! At the show, I knew there would be bass solos, and Billy did not disappoint, with an epic five-minute solo of bass wizardry that was truly one of kind. His use of harmonic feedback and bending the neck is a trick most decent players could pull off, but how he incorporates it into his playing is just so exciting. Seeing him made me want to practise immediately, and think up new ways to enhance my own personal rig, using new pedals – and even ways to update my signature bass in the future.

www.trivium.org



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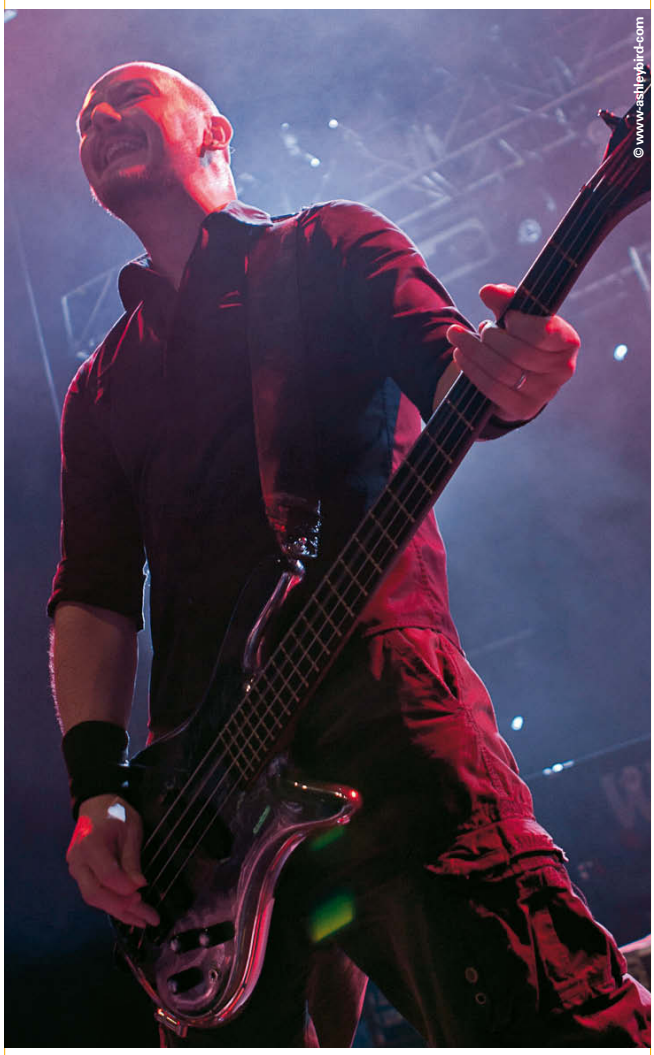
THE ALTERNATIVE ROCKER

MICHAEL MCKEEGAN

Therapy? bassist Mike gets orchestral on us



The new year springs fresh and while I should be looking to the future rather than harking back to the past, I'm going to reference a cool event that happened last year. We were playing a Belgian festival, and the organiser came to us with the brilliant (and quite bonkers) idea of having us play our biggest hit in that region with as many cello players as he could muster. A renowned Belgian conductor wrote out a score for it, transposed it accordingly and then set about the task of rehearsing with the players. In the end they managed to pull together 14 professionals, semi-professionals and a couple of amateurs. We had the pleasure of sitting in on the final dress rehearsal and it was an experience I'll never forget. To hear a song we'd played hundreds of times before completely transformed was unbelievable. I'd never attended a classical event before, so you can imagine it was quite an eye-opener. On the night, there were logistical and dynamic issues to consider: would it be wise to end a festival set with a downtempo string ballad? The festival changeover itself was quite a fraught 30 minutes, with various ramps and platforms added to stage all the players. It was also a feat for the sound engineers to get them all mic'd up, with any feedback issues solved. The reaction of the crowd said it all: they stood rapt through the full performance in respectful silence – no mean feat for a festival crowd of more than 10,000 people. The lesson to embrace in 2015? Try fresh spins on the familiar...

www.therapyquestionmark.co.uk

THE EXTENDED-RANGE SPECIALIST

STEWART MCKINSEY

Ten-string-wielding Dark Lord Stew completes his bass survey

To close this series, I contacted Yves Carbonne, whose fretless 12-string bass is as iconic as his playing is inspiring. He addressed technical and aesthetic issues in his insightful replies to my queries. A veteran of French television, Yves has studied with and recorded with legendary players such as Marcus Miller and Michael Manring. His way of combining virtuosic performance in accessible compositions is an art in and of itself. Seeing him do it in person, and knowing that he teaches in clinics and masterclasses, puts him in a very select group of musicians. What began from a "desire to extend the range of the bass guitar" has led him down an interesting path. "I want to continue developing my own voice," he says. "I look up to musicians who have a sound, a feel, and who have been strong and honest enough to develop their own personality. I would like to hear more creative bass players with their own personality and fewer clones of other bass players." When asked for his thoughts on solo bass and bass solos, Yves explains, "I want to be touched. I want to feel something. Are you trying to impress the public or to touch people, giving them something from your life?"

On the subject of gear, Yves is very clear. "Music comes first, which means you get a new instrument because you have a precise idea about what you are going to play with it. If you have no idea what you will do with a new instrument, and you only want it because you think it's cool, forget it!" He concludes, "Music is only about what you are, and in the best case the instrument becomes an extension of yourself. I want to be inspired! I value the capacity of listening, to not be afraid of silence and to give something from your heart." If someone on this artistic and technical level is this clear in terms of vision, where do you stand?

www.facebook.com + search 'Stewart McKinsey'

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ELLEN O'REILLY

ELLEN CONTINUES HER BEGINNERS' EXPLORATION OF THE MODES OF THE MAJOR SCALE

Last month we looked in some depth at the three more 'major' sounding modes, which are Ionian, Lydian and Mixolydian. The reason these scales have a more 'major' tonality is due to the presence of the major 3rd.

A quick recap! The Ionian can be viewed as simply the major scale starting on the root: one note, the #4, changes in this scale to make it Lydian; and the b7 is the note that's changed to make it Mixolydian. The Lydian is the mode that starts on the 4th degree or IV chord, and the Mixolydian is the mode that starts on the 5th degree or V chord. Roman numbers are used when talking about chords within a key, and the modes directly correlate with these chords. As you can see in the table below, the I, IV and V chords are associated with the 'major' sounding modes.

Chord Number	Related mode
I	Ionian
IV	Lydian
V	Mixolydian

The remaining modes have a more 'minor' sound due to the presence of the minor 3rd and flat or minor 7th. These modes are Dorian, Phrygian, Aeolian and Locrian, and they consist of the following formulas.

Dorian: Root - major 2nd - minor 3rd - perfect 4th - perfect 5th - major 6th - minor 7th - octave

Phrygian: Root - minor 2nd - minor 3rd - perfect 4th - perfect 5th - minor 6th - minor 7th - octave

Aoelian: Root - major 2nd - minor 3rd - perfect 4th - perfect 5th – minor 6th - minor 7th - octave

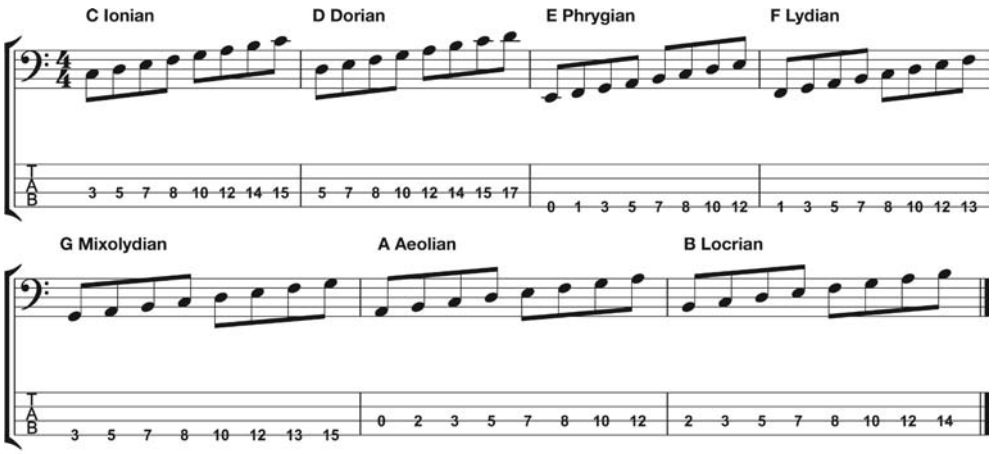
Locrian: Root - minor 2nd - minor 3rd - perfect 4th - flattened 5th - minor 6th - minor 7th - octave

The chord tones (the individual notes of a chord) present in each of these modes are the root, 3rd, 5th and 7th. The chords that directly correlate with the 'minor' sounding modes are indicated in the table below.

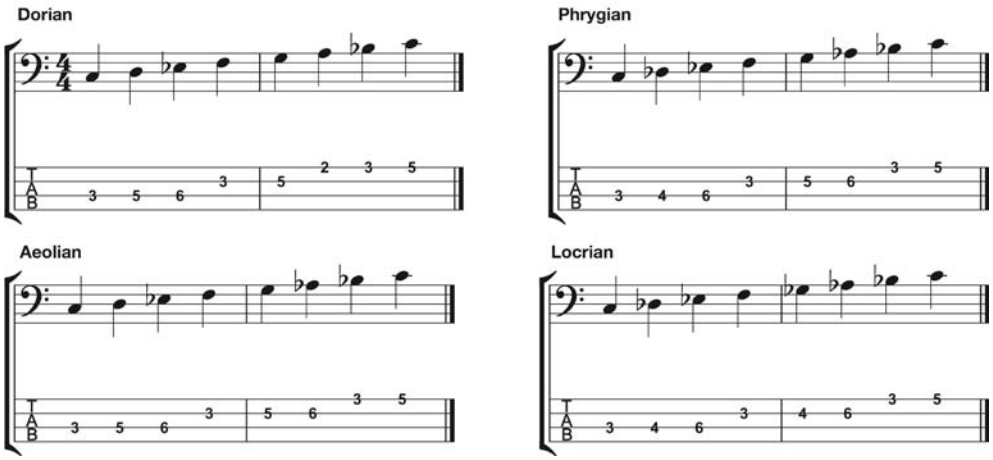
Chord Number	Related mode
II	Dorian
III	Phrygian
VI	Aeolian
VII	Locrian

So, what does all this mean for bass players, I hear you ask? Just this: if you want to navigate the fretboard as melodically as possible, these modes will help you achieve fretboard fluency. Choose a key, and play each mode starting from each degree of the scale. Jam with a guitarist or keyboardist and try playing the mode that fits over the chords that the other musician is playing. You'll be surprised how quickly it all starts to make sense.

Example 1



Example 2



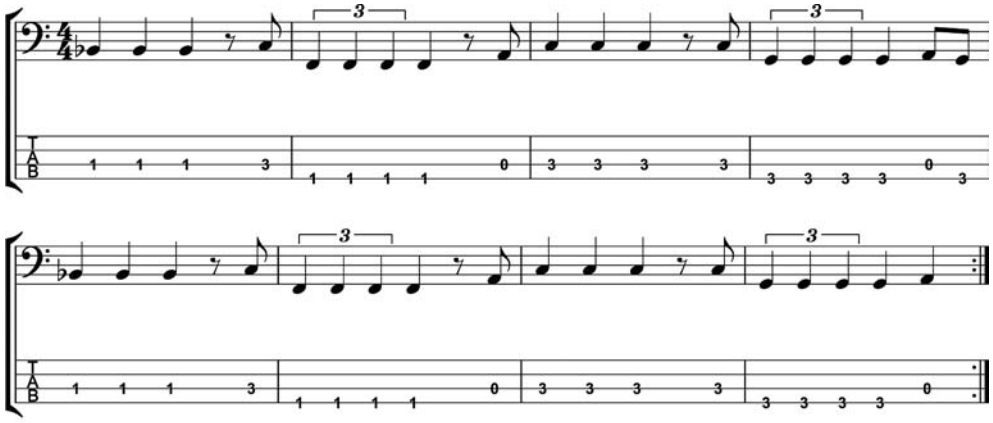
PAUL GEARY

RHYTHM TRIPLETS EXPLORED COURTESY OF OUR MAN GEARY

In this next series of columns I would like to take a look at rhythm and notation. The first figure we are going to take a look at is a triplet. In essence, a triplet means three, and within music it essentially means fitting three notes into the space of two. This will dramatically change the rhythm of any piece of music, dependent on feel and genre. The following technical examples are based around a reggae feel and should be played with considerable swing.

Example 1 starts with crochets played on a Bb note (first fret, A string) followed by an 8th note pickup on C (third fret, A string). Bar two is where we reach our first quarter note triplets played on F (first fret, E string). We then have a crochet on beat three. It's important to hit this note with a strong downbeat: this will help the bar to flow consistently with the pulse. We then have another pickup note on A (open string). Don't neglect these notes, they help to keep the whole line flowing and are crucial as a lead tone into the next bar. In bar four we switch the triplet to the low G note (third fret, E string), followed by a G crochet on beat three. We then have two pickup 8th notes on A and G, leading to bar five where we are back to low Bb.

Example 1



Example 2

Ideally it would be great to set up a basic click or reggae loop to play these examples. Make sure they are played with this style in mind.

Example 2 starts with a crochet rest followed by an 8th note rest. This creates a classic reggae feel. In bar two the same applies until we get to the quarter-note triplets played on low B (second fret, A string) and open E. Bar four is where we switch to a triplet at the start of the bar played on E (second fret, D string) and B (second fret, A string). Beat three is a crochet on open E, and the pickup notes are played on open E and A. Try to imagine a fill on the drums at this point. That's what I had in mind when writing this particular bar. You will notice a change in rhythm when we hit bar five. This is created by the quarter and 8th note rests at the beginning of the bar. In bar six we hit the triplet again at the end of the bar. The overall rhythm feels slightly behind the beat: this makes for a solid reggae groove. Finally try playing the examples with the thumb, but plucked rather than slapped. Have a go at palm-muting the strings with your picking hand while playing the notes with the thumb.

Next month we will continue to explore rhythm as well as putting the triplet to work within a reggae progression. Until then, have fun!

APP EXTRA
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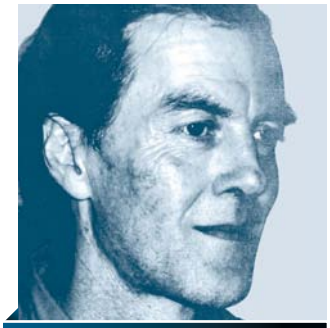

ROB STATHAM

THIS MONTH ROB STATHAM WARNS US TO HOLD OUR POSITION STEADY

In my last column I looked at the topic of position shifting on the bass, something we have to negotiate frequently. I often see students use fingerings that involve unnecessary shifts in position, so this month let's look at how we can avoid this and try to stay in one position as much as possible.

I'll state at the outset that I'm not saying we should always go with the fingering that keeps us in one position. Sometimes we might wish to slide up to a note, or we may just prefer the way it feels to play a particular line with a position shift, even if it could be avoided. I think as long as we play the line well, that is absolutely fine, but we should at least be able to consider all our options and not just assume that a position shift is needed where, if we look a little more closely, we might see that it is not.

A useful insight to develop is to be able to spot both forward and backward fingerings for all intervals, by which I mean being able to conceive of a minor 3rd, for example, played either up the neck on one string – a forward shape – or down the neck across two – a backward shape. While these two alternative fingerings for a minor 3rd are well known and frequently used interchangeably, we're not always so good at noticing alternatives with other intervals. For instance, we mostly conceive of an octave pattern as a forward shape, across two strings and up two frets, yet it can comfortably be played as a backward shape, across three strings and back three frets.

"OUR TENDENCY ALWAYS TO SEE OCTAVE PATTERNS AS FORWARD SHAPES OFTEN MAKES FOR AWKWARD FINGERINGS"

Our first example illustrates this with a two-bar bass-line on a B minor pentatonic, where the fingering used in the first two bars is the one that appears most apparent, playing with a double bass fingering and shifting between each half of the bar to a forward octave shape. I have indicated the fingering in the first bar with a diagonal line representing the position shift, the second bar being much the same on the next string. This does mean there is a lot of position shifting going on, every half bar in fact. The second version renders this unnecessary by conceiving of the B octave as a backward shape – from the seventh fret on the E string played with our fourth finger, to the fourth fret on the G string, played with our first finger. The shape thus sits nicely in a one-finger-per-fret position.

Our tendency always to see octave patterns as forward shapes often makes for awkward fingerings, especially at tempo, and the second example again contrasts two possible fingerings on a bass-line using octaves moving up and down the first three notes of a minor pentatonic. Again, at first glance it seems obvious to play the pattern with forward shapes moving up and down the neck, as I have tabbed it out in the first bar, which would involve a lot of constant shifting. However, the entire line can be comfortably played in one position, conceiving of the C octave as a backward shape, with the forward shapes of the A and D octaves sitting comfortably within that one-finger-per-fret pattern. It's true that this may be a little trickier in terms of string-crossing considerations, the octave played across three strings being a little harder than the forward shape. This is all the more reason to practise it until it is reasonably secure and can provide a useful alternative for us.

If we sometimes ignore the backward octave shape it's true to say that the interval of a 5th is also often overlooked when fingered this way, effectively the same as the backward octave shape but across two strings rather than three. I demonstrate this in the third example, a four bar bass-line using 5ths and octaves moving up and down a Locrian scale in B. Were we to play this with forward octave shapes throughout, we would again need to make many shifts in position. Try playing this using forward shapes only, starting from B with the first finger on the second fret of the A string, and you'll see what I mean.

If we start with our first finger on B at the seventh fret on the E string, then – using forward and

backward shapes for the 5th and octaves – we can play the entire four bars in one position. Note that this means the forward shapes will need to be played with the first and third finger (the first four notes of the line) and the second and fourth finger (the next four notes), rather than using double bass fingering, as we might often do for octave patterns. In the second two bars, where the line is descending with a pattern of 5th, we can use forward and backward shapes for this interval to remain comfortably in one position.

If we consider using a five-fret fingering pattern then we can conceive of even more possibilities, as I demonstrate in our last example. Here we need to conceive of a five-fret span between C at the eighth fret on the E string and the E at the 12th fret. Our first finger plays the C while our second, third and fourth fingers cover the 10th, 11th and 12th fret. At the same time, we need to be able to visualise the two one-finger-per-fret systems covered in the five-fret span, as we will be moving between these as we play the exercise. This is based on major seven arpeggios moving up in semitones from C to Ab, alternating between ascending and descending, all played within this one five-fret span. At times, however, we will need to think in terms of a four-fret span from the first finger on the eighth fret, and at other times a four-fret span back from the fourth finger at the 12th fret. This constitutes a slight opening or closing of the hand, with the thumb on the back of the neck not required to move, and so can be considered all in one position.

The exercise uses four different fingerings for a major seven arpeggio, two of these using the five-fret span, and one combining a four- and five-fret

Example 1

Example 2

Example 3

Example 4

span, as well as the more common forward octave four-fret pattern associated with this arpeggio. You will need to be a little careful with where you change from one fingering pattern to another here to avoid running out of fingers: for instance, when playing the ascending F# arpeggio at the start of the fourth bar, it will be best to adjust to the higher, four-fret position for the major 7th. We play that note, E#, with our second finger, ensuring our third finger can play the F# at the start of the descending G arpeggio, allowing us to play the D at the 12th fret with our fourth. Once we work out where best to make these slight adjustments, the whole exercise sits under the fingers quite comfortably.

As you can see, there are always more fingering choices than we might at first imagine, and thus it is well worth experimenting with these possibilities, learning to see all intervals in forward and backward shapes, and giving ourselves more options for any line we might wish to play.

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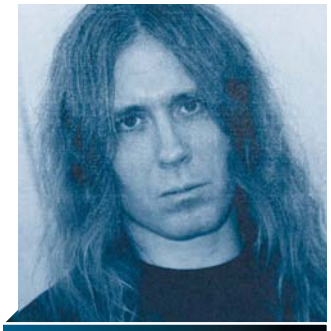


ALEX WEBSTER

LOOKING FOR 8TH NOTE AND 16TH NOTE GROUPS IN 4/4? DIVE IN WITH WEBSTER!

For the past two months we have been looking at different groupings of 8th and 16th notes in 4/4. Before moving on to another meter, let's work with some musical examples to further drive this concept home for all of us.

I've beamed the groups of notes in the examples to emphasise the phrases you'll be playing, rather than the beat of the time signature. For example, a 3, 3, 2 8th note phrase like the one shown in **Example 1** would typically be written as shown in the first bar, with two notes beamed together to emphasise the beat of the time signature. The beaming in the second bar more clearly illustrates the phrase you're playing, so for this month's lesson we'll proceed with that format. Keep in mind that bars one and two are the exact same thing – they're just written differently.

Example 2 has a 3, 3, 2 8th note feel throughout. The first two bars of 8ths set up the feel of the example, making it fairly easy to count through the remaining measures.

Example 1

Example 2

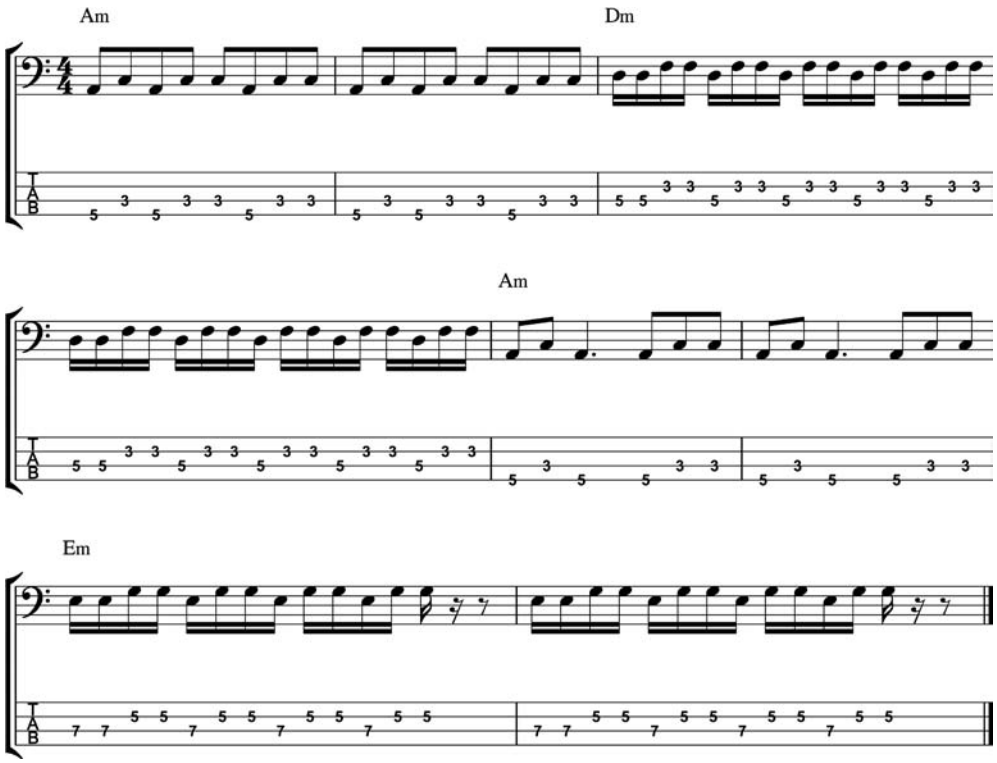
Example 3 has a 3, 3, 3, 3, 4 16th note pattern. Be ready for the rests in bars five and six. If you've got the feel of the example locked in, it should be easy to drop out for the correct duration. Sometimes leaving the right amount of space can be harder than actually playing.

Example 4 works through the same chord progression as the prior examples, but this time alternates between a 2, 3, 3 8th note feel and a 4, 3, 3, 3, 3 16th note feel. Make sure you practise this at a slow enough tempo that the jump to 16th in bar three is comfortable.

Once you become comfortable with these examples, try making your own modifications: add rests, try different groupings, change the chord progression and so on. The more 4/4 phrases you have at your fingertips, the better.

Example 3

Example 4



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FRANC O'SHEA

FUNKMASTER FRANC GETS HIS BOOTSY CHOPS ON FOR A FUNK SOLO. ON THE ONE!

Funk comes in many flavours, from fingerstyle playing to the later slap development. Funk, like rock, is a style that lends itself to mixing well with other genres such as pop, soul, jazz, Latin and fusion. James Brown was a key figure in the early development of funk, and his bass player Bootsy Collins went on to make a whole solo career from the style. After leaving James Brown, Bootsy worked with both Parliament and Funkadelic.

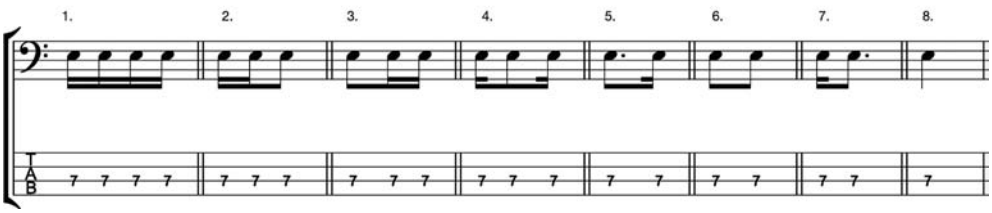
In the mid-70s, players such as Stanley Clarke and Jaco Pastorius blended the funk style with jazz. Both had very distinctive styles: Clarke's slap workouts cut through the mix due to his bright tone, whereas Jaco's sound was more acoustic and lyrical due to his use of fingerstyle with a fretless bass.

Punk and new wave hit the scene in the late 70s and early 80s, with many players such as Norman Watt-Roy from Ian Dury & The Blockheads showing jazz-funk influences, as demonstrated with his bubbling line on 'Hit Me With Your Rhythm Stick'.

In the early 90s funk experienced another resurgence in the form of acid jazz, with bands such as Jamiroquai and Galliano pioneering the new genre. Still going strong,

Example 1

Group 1 - Semiquaver Rhythms



Example 2

Group 2 - Semiquaver Rhythms

Example 3

E7 Semitone Phrases

Jamiroquai have featured three excellent bassists over the years starting out with the inspirational Stuart Zender, followed by Nick Fyfe and currently Paul Turner. Other notable funk players from the mid-90s onwards include Marcus Miller and Flea of the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

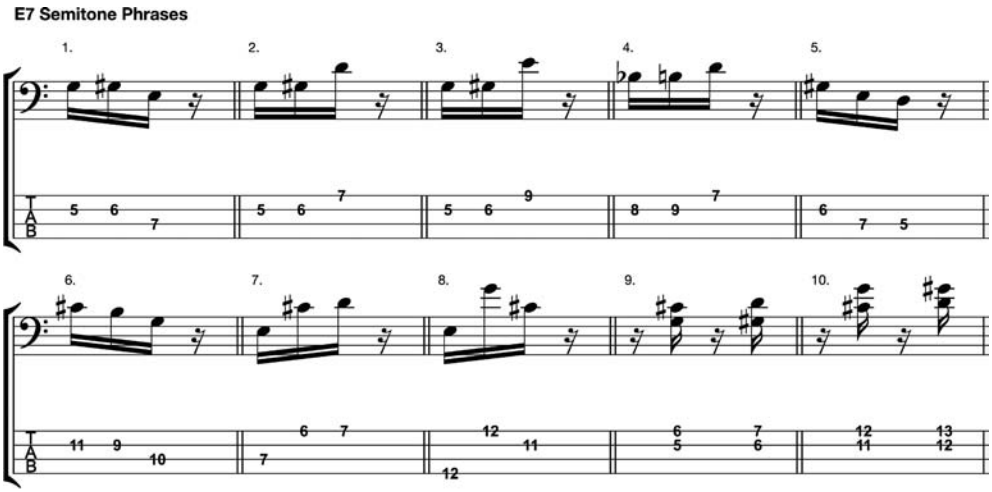
Since most funk players can pull a solo out of the bag at the drop of a hat, what type of musical ideas would enable you to be able to create an effective solo in this style? I will be looking at various ideas that I have broken down into components, that when used in combination create a wealth of material that will enable you to do just that. Although I will be looking at fingerstyle funk, these ideas can be applied to the slap style just as effectively.

The type of scales that work well with the funk genre are the usual candidates such as the Dorian and Mixolydian modes, along with minor, and sometimes major, pentatonic scales; the minor blues scale and even the chromatic scale. All the above can even be combined when the foundation chord is an E7, but scales themselves don't create music, and since funk includes a strong rhythmic component I have started out by looking at semiquaver patterns that fall into a single crotchet.

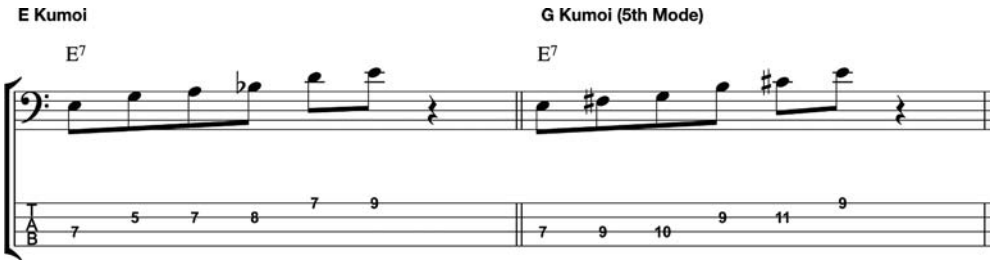
Example 1 demonstrates the possible patterns that start on the beat, beginning with four consecutive semiquavers shown in the first pattern. Although both patterns six and eight don't contain semiquavers, the method is to use different combinations of the patterns as a springboard for new ideas and it would narrow your options if they weren't included. It is worth noting that although each note is shown as full value, you could play them as staccato if desired.

Example 2 is an extension to the rhythmic idea presented in the first, however, the patterns shown here are all

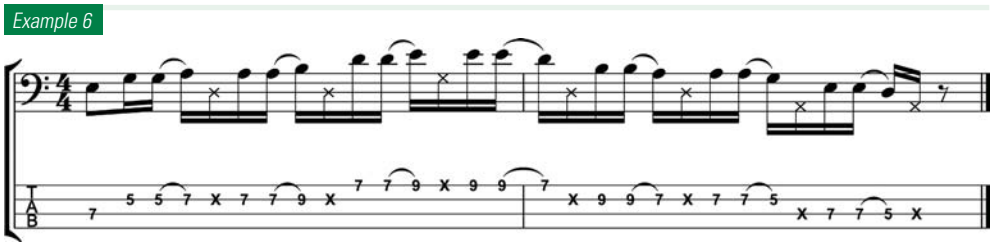
Example 4



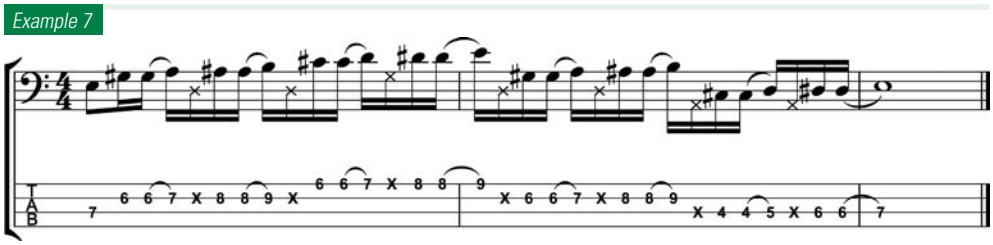
Example 5



Example 6



Example 7



offbeat patterns, with a rest indicated for the first semiquaver of the crotchet. Most funk (but not all) tends to be in 4/4, and by experimenting with combinations of the 15 patterns shown in the first and second example, you will soon realise that the possibilities are considerable.

What about notes, though? I indicated above some scales that would work well within the funk genre, but as I mentioned scales on their own are not enough. We need to know how to use them to create music. The next few examples demonstrate some short motifs, that when combined with one another and with the rhythmic patterns, offer a plethora of ideas that can enable us to create an effective solo. Our examples are all shown in relation to an E tonality, as the use of this key, and particular dominant 7th chords, is common in funk. Minor 7th and other chords are often used for funk too, but although dominant 7th chords lend themselves to almost every note working well against them, you have to be particularly careful to avoid using a major 3rd for a prolonged period on a minor 7th. They can be effectively used as passing notes, though.

Example 3 demonstrates the use of three consecutive chromatic notes that link up various scale degrees taken from both the minor and major pentatonic scales. These motifs work well both ascending and descending, and once you have a grip on them they prove very easy to improvise with.

Example 4 demonstrates a variety of good-sounding note combinations that either use chromatically enhanced scale excerpts or just scale motifs.

Example 5 employs a fairly uncommon pentatonic scale, the Kumoi from Japan. It is interesting for several reasons, especially the fact that its formula is exactly the same as a major pentatonic scale (1, 2, 3, 5, 6) except for its 3rd, which is lowered from a major to a minor, (Kumoi = 1, 2, b3, 5, 6). This gives it an ambiguous, blues/funk/jazz sound, since a tritone interval is created between its minor 3rd and major 6th. Played as a chord it would create a min6/9 chord.

Another point of interest is that a different mode from the Kumoi can be used from the same original root, in this example E. You will note that a G Kumoi scale is shown in the second bar of Example 5, but it starts from E as its fifth mode is employed. The formula is now 1, b3, 4, b5 and b7, which on closer inspection you will note is exactly the same as a minor blues scale (1, b3, 4, b5, 5, b7) with its perfect 5th omitted.

Examples 6 and 7 demonstrate the technique of combining hammer-ons or pull-offs with dead notes, to create a conga-like, almost vocal quality to your lines. Fans of Jaco will recognise this technique as he used it extensively in funk lines throughout his career.

Next month I'll be demonstrating how we can begin putting together the material shown in this month's column to develop some effective ideas for use in funk solos. Until then, keep it funky.

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PHIL MANN

FOUR FINGERS GOOD, SAYS QUADRIDIGITAL TECHNIQUE NINJA PHIL

A new year and a new study! It's time to evolve our right hand from a conventional two-fingered technique to a more modern, four-fingered approach endorsed by the likes of Gary Willis, Matthew Garrison and Damian Erskine. Well, I say four-fingered: it's actually three fingers and a thumb – but let's not be pedantic...

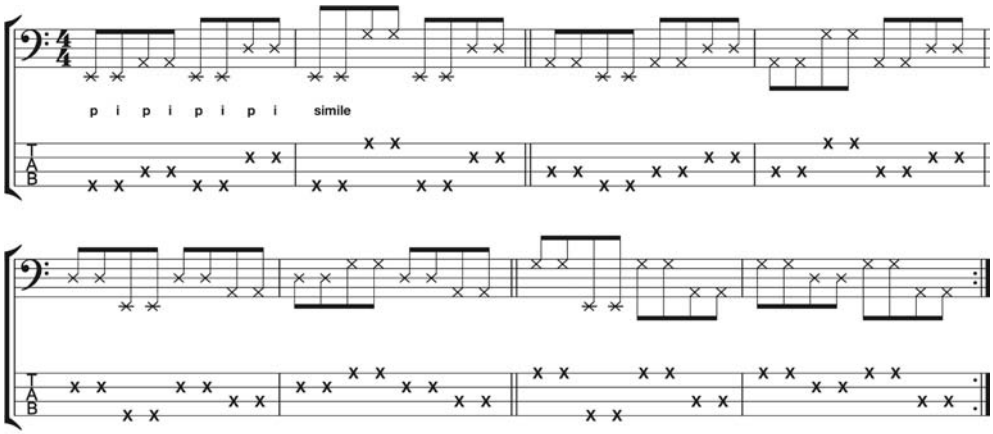
To begin, this month we'll just be concentrating on two digits and then we'll build up our skills over the coming issues. You'll probably be used to using your index finger and middle finger to strike the strings in your plucking hand: however, all of our exercises in this month's column will concentrate on the combining of either the thumb and index finger or thumb and middle finger.

Let's first take a look at some basics to set us up for tackling the exercises that follow. Initially, curl the fingers of your plucking hand into your palm with your thumb elevated, as if you were giving the thumbs-up to someone. The digits should fall roughly in line with one another, mirroring the alignment of the string. Commonly, a ramp between the pickups of your bass is customary when working on this technique, but it's not essential. A ramp will give you a natural form of compression by stopping your fingers from striking too hard when playing through the string, thus enabling the plucking hand to produce a more even output from all the digits. On the other hand, classical and country guitarists also endorse similar approaches, and neither traditionally uses a ramp. In short, ramps are preferred – but you can still develop this technique without one.

To enable us to identify the rudiments being applied to the plucking hand, we'll use the Spanish terminology from classical guitar where p = thumb (pulgar), i = index finger (index), m = middle finger (mayor) and finally a = ring finger (annular).

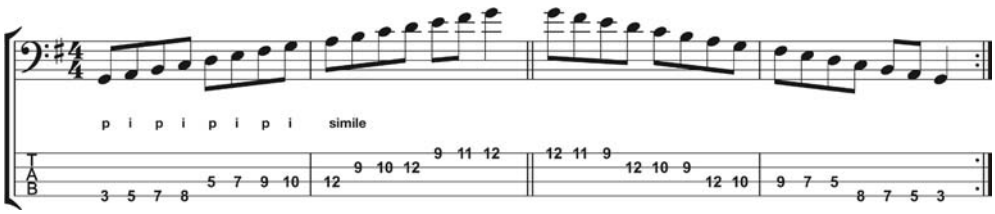
Using your thumb (p) and index finger (i), practise the following string-crossing exercise to a click. No fretted notes are involved, so mute all the strings with your fretting hand and concentrate on your plucking hand. You'll notice that each bar uses a different string as an anchoring point. Once completed using p and i, endorse your thumb (p) and middle finger (m) over the same exercise in an identical fashion.

Exercise 1



Exercise 2

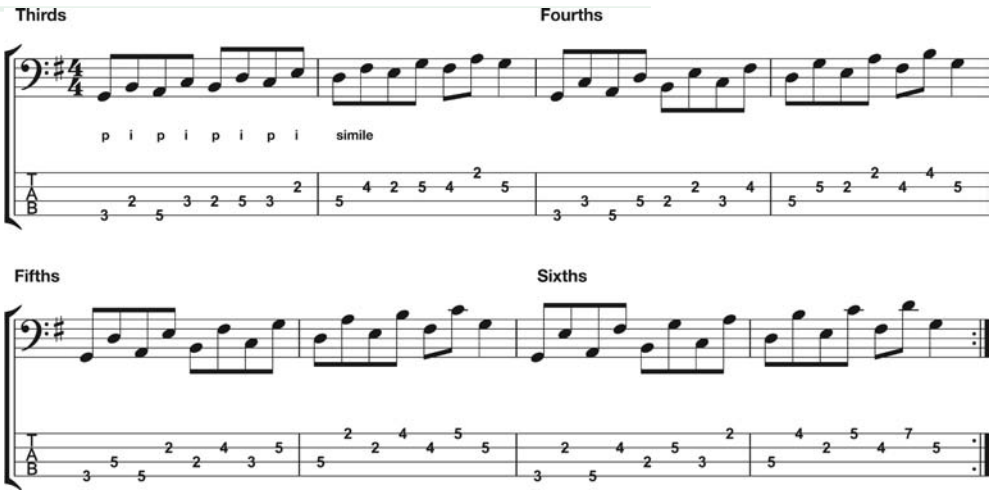
In **Exercise 2** you will alternate your thumb (p) and index finger (i) continually to perform the following major scale over two octaves. Then, as before, switch to your thumb (p) and middle finger (m) to perform it in a similar manner. Make sure you can transpose the exercise into all 12 keys using both fingering combinations.



"A RAMP WILL GIVE YOU A NATURAL FORM OF COMPRESSION BY STOPPING YOUR FINGERS FROM STRIKING TOO HARD WHEN PLAYING THROUGH THE STRING, THUS ENABLING THE PLUCKING HAND TO PRODUCE A MORE EVEN OUTPUT FROM ALL THE DIGITS"

Exercise 3

Still addressing the pairing of thumb/index and thumb/middle, the following exercise requires the pairs to perform a number of varied diatonic interval skips. Practise these exercises to a click in all 12 keys, using both p + i and p + m.



Exercise 4

Now focus on a triplet subdivision by introducing a hammer-on to our two-digit technique. Pluck the first note of each string with your thumb (p) before hammering on the second with the fretting hand (h), and then pluck the same note with the index/middle finger to complete the rhythmic subdivision.

Exercise 5

Our final exercise is a short groove that incorporates this month's elements. Work through it, identifying the triplets and also the 16th note patterns that have been formed by incorporating the hammer-on technique. Next time we'll introduce three-digit rudiments by combining p, i and m. Until then, practise hard!

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DAVID ETHERIDGE

NAVIGATING THE DOUBLE BASS FINGERBOARD WITH CAPTAIN DAVID ETHERIDGE

This month, let's look at different ways of getting around the fingerboard. This means scales and arpeggios, which I know can seem like watching paint dry to some students, but they're the basic building blocks of your bass parts. Indeed, if you're doing any ABRSM (Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music) grade exams, they're mandatory.

Let's look at **Figure 1**: here's a two-octave scale of C. Most people will play most of this on the G string and go up the neck through the positions. One nice thing about certain keys is that you can use open strings as part of your scale, and here we can use open D and G, with all the notes above that on the G string. Personally, I don't subscribe to some classical players' ideas that you should never use an open string. Anything that makes playing easier should be used, surely?

I've given a standard fingering here, which is the sort of thing you'll see in books by Simandl and others. Here we're using 1st, 3rd, 5th and thumb positions. In fact you'll find that all scales have varying combinations of positions

Figure 1

Figure 2

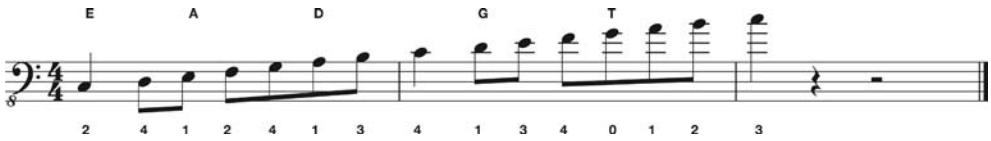

Figure 3

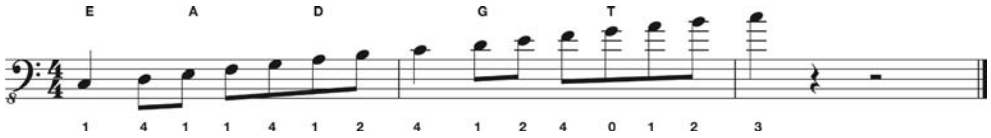

Figure 4

Figure 5

Figure 6

Figure 7

Figure 8

for sections of the scale (for example, 3rd and 5th, 2 1/2 and 4), no matter what the key is.

Now, while going up through the positions on one string is useful for getting your muscle memory trained and moving between positions, this emphasis on the G (and to a lesser extent, D) strings in position work misses out on the notes and positions available if you move across all four strings. The 'cross string' approach (for want of a better term) allows you to group notes in a scale or arpeggio together and have fewer moves.

Figure 2 shows that if we start on the E string and use extended fingering, which is the same principle as standard one-finger-per-fret fingering on bass guitar, we can get all the way from C to high F in one position, and then use thumb position for the last four notes. For those with smaller hands, we can use standard fingering (1, 2 4) and shift a semitone back and forwards: **Figure 3** shows the fingering.

In fact the extended fingering approach works in 'difficult' keys as well. Shifting down a semitone to B gives us almost the same result, as in **Figure 4**. However, as we can't use the harmonic for the F#, we'll use a 1 3, 2 3 fingering for the last four notes.

There are many different ways of fingering any scale, from putting as many notes as possible on one string – usually the G – and climbing up through the positions, to grouping as many notes across strings in one position where possible. Francois Rabbath claims that there are potentially over 120 different fingerings for a four-octave scale of C on a five-string bass. In his three-volume method, he gives you around 12 different fingerings for each two-octave scale to get started on, and you can work out any others for yourself.

The point is that you can investigate grouping sections of the scale on any string, so that wherever you are on the neck and whatever string you are on, you know exactly where to go to continue up or down. Here's a standard fingering for a two-octave scale of F in **Figure 5**. Notice that the bottom octave plus a fourth (up to Bb) is in half position, the upper notes all being on the G string. In **Figure 6** we go up the D string, from open D right up to C, and cross over to the G string for the high D.

In **Figure 7** we use the A string to move up to higher positions, crossing over to the D on the high A and to the G again at high D. **Figure 8** shows that we can move up the E string all the way up to D before crossing over the strings in extended position as before.

As you can see from the last four examples, there are many different ways to finger scales, and these principles work in all keys. More importantly, once you get used to working this way, you get used to thinking in intervals rather than keys, so keys with lots of sharps and flats lose their terror for you. Very often, it's only a semitone from an easy key to a 'difficult' key!

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MIKE BROOKS

MIKE SUPPLIES THE SOLUTIONS TO A HOST OF COVER-BAND PROBLEMS

Howdy bass brethren! Running a band can be time-consuming, but it needn't be stressful if you plan ahead, organise yourself and prepare for most eventualities. From the outset, it pays to decide whether one person runs the band and is remunerated for it, or if the duties are spread around the whole band. Will the band travel to gigs in one vehicle or van, or will each member be responsible for their own transport? Will one band-member provide a PA, will the band buy a PA so everyone has a share, or will each member be responsible for certain parts of the PA? So many questions...

Musicians aren't the most organised individuals so if you're a good organiser, it is a massive plus. As a gigging band, a large percentage of your time will be spent in each other's company. To a certain extent you rely on each other to do the best job possible, so look after yourself. Excessive drinking, drug-taking and general shenanigans can let the side down. *[Spoilsport – Ed]*

Plans can, and do, go wrong, so whether it's gear, transport or people, expect problems and have an idea how to work around them. When co-ordinating the band to get to gigs and informing everyone what each gig entails, a co-ordination sheet ensures that everyone gets the same information. Where possible, get the information out as soon as possible so everyone in the band has the info they need, especially if gigging away from home and staying over. Make sure everyone can get to gigs, whether they drive or not, and keep a list of stand-in musicians or 'deps' (more of whom in a future column) at hand all the time. Contact group lists on smartphones are a lifesaver, should someone not make the gig.

After the initial start-up of the band, it should be clear what everyone's role is in terms of setting up prior to the gig. Finances play an important part in the running of a band and can lead to much conflict, so get the ground rules established early on. If one person runs the band, are they paid a wage or do they take a commission for the gigs they bring to the band? How will gig fees be split? Will there be a band kitty for expenses such as website costs, postage, duplication and promotional materials, rehearsal costs, equipment and lighting spares, PAT testing and public liability insurance? You also need to be aware of tax and national insurance implications, so keep all receipts relating to the band, all paperwork regarding payments to the band, maintain a record of what each band-member receives, insist on invoices for payments and be organised.

If you are given the job of running the band or at least taking the bookings, be prepared to be online almost permanently. Venues, agents and gig bookers don't operate on a nine to five basis, and turning your phone, tablet or laptop off can make the difference between taking a clutch of gigs and missing the boat entirely. You need to be contactable as much as possible, so keep all available lines of communication open. Keep up with online chat services such as WhatsApp, Kik and Facebook Messenger.

See you next month!

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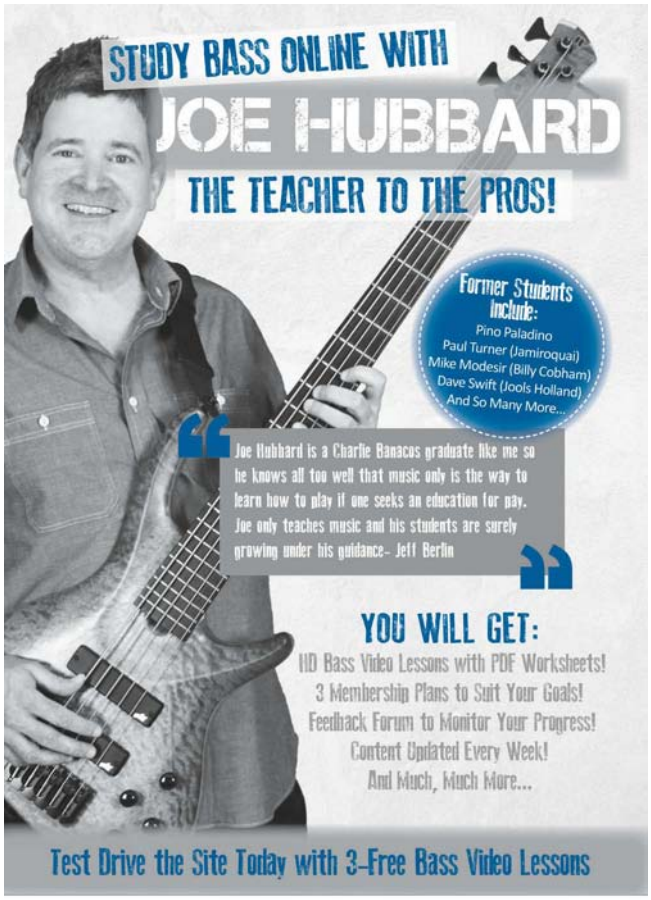
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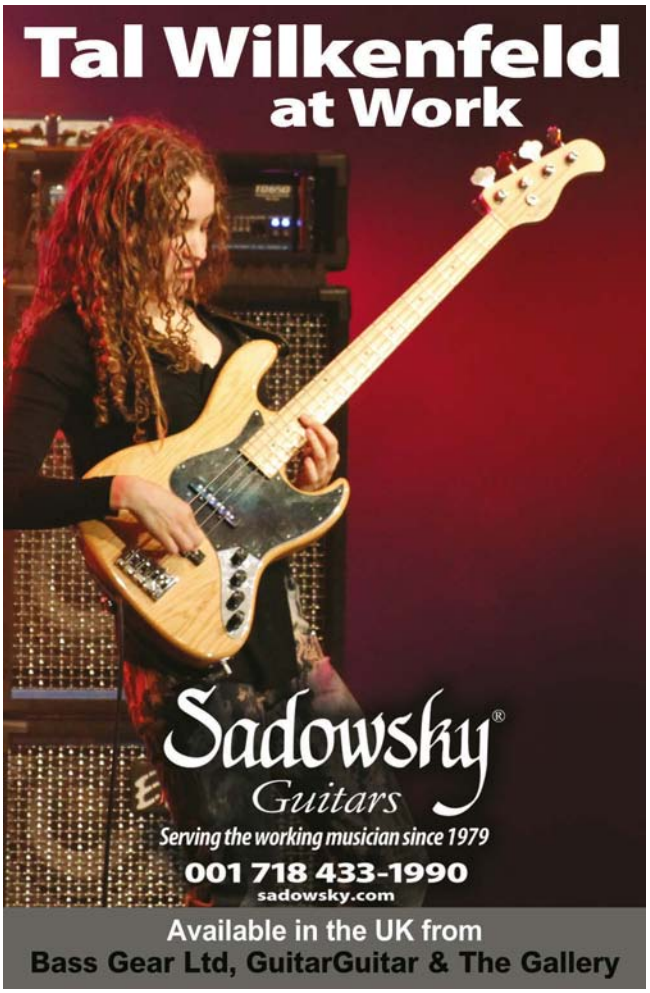
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STEVE LAWSON

ORDER! ORDER! MR SPEAKER, STEVE LAWSON, REQUIRES YOUR ATTENTION

A topic we've touched on oh-so-briefly before now is that of the order your effects pedals should go in. This is one of those areas where there's definitely an orthodoxy that has formed around 'how things should be done', but it's an orthodoxy that requires disregarding if you want to make some truly freaky noises. The supposed 'right' way to do things tends to make some pretty major assumptions about what's desirable and what isn't. And we're not all that interested in that, are we? No, we're not.

Back-pedalling for a moment, what's the big idea here? Surely a pedal makes your bass sound a certain way and that's it, right? Well, no. Let's take as our first example an envelope filter pedal and a delay pedal. The filter responds to the volume of the input signal, and the delay reproduces whatever is put into it and spits it out at slowly decreasing volume at whatever tempo is set. If the envelope is first in the chain, whatever squelchy sound you make will be repeated over and over as it comes out of the delay. The volume will drop, but the tone of the sound will stay the same.

If, however, you reverse the two pedals, as the delay level drops, the envelope will slowly 'close' (or open, depending on your choice of envelope filter and the settings). Each repeat of the clean signal that's gone into the delay will hit the front end of the envelope filter at a different level, resulting in a different kind of squelchy noise. This is a completely different effect from having them the other way round.

The same goes for distortion and compression. If you put a compressor before your distortion or overdrive, it will even out the volume of the sound going into the distortion, producing a much more uniform amount of the effect. If you put it after the overdrive, all of the dynamic changes you make with your picking hand will change the amount of distortion, but the compressor after the overdrive pedal will level out the volume of the changing sound.

You can multiply up the range of possible influences by adding more effects. Thus with four pedals, we have 24 different possible combinations! Each of those will have their own unique cascade of influence, and none of them are more 'right' than the others.

What it comes down to is the degree to which you're trying to emulate a particular sound, or invent new and surprising sonic possibilities. One of our richest areas of experimentation is reverb, given that it's considered sacrosanct in many fields to put reverb at the end of the chain. But applying effects to reverb can result in some truly wonderful tonal variations, particularly envelope, step filter, reverse delay and panning effects. They remove reverb entirely from its role as 'the room' in your sound, and make it part of an altogether more experimental sound design world.

This month, your homework is to unplug everything on your board, swap things around and see what kind of mayhem you can produce!

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